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MAY 29, 2006 WASHINGTON, D.C. ISSUE 4,767 VOLUME 234

COVER STORY

Stephen Kotkin **30** **Gasputin** In the six years since Vladimir Putin took power, two Russias have come to exist side by side: the secretive, corrupt Kremlin (and the billionaires with whom it is parasitically entangled) and the impoverished, infirm, criminally neglected people. The euphoria of the 1990s over the rise of democracy and the predicted economic boom has been replaced by a deepening pessimism among both Western and native analysts and observers. Has Russia blown its greatest opportunity? A crop of new books examines the deceptions and the desperations of Putin's Russia.

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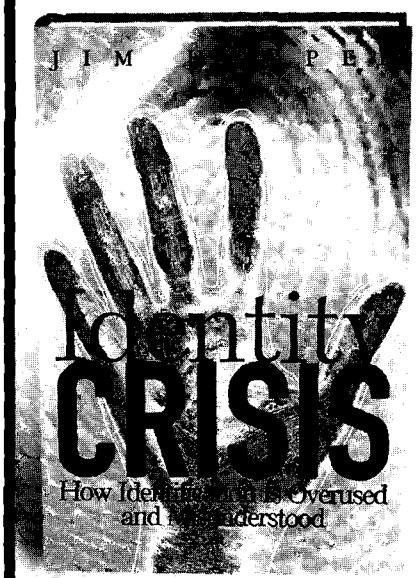
How to Strengthen Security without Reducing Privacy



Finally, someone has cut through all the jargon and techno-babble and looked at it all with common sense and a clear eye. Jim Harper has produced a thoughtful, fast-paced, enjoyable tour through this brave new world.

—Steven Brill
CEO of Verified Identity Pass and author of *After: How America Confronted the September 12 Era*

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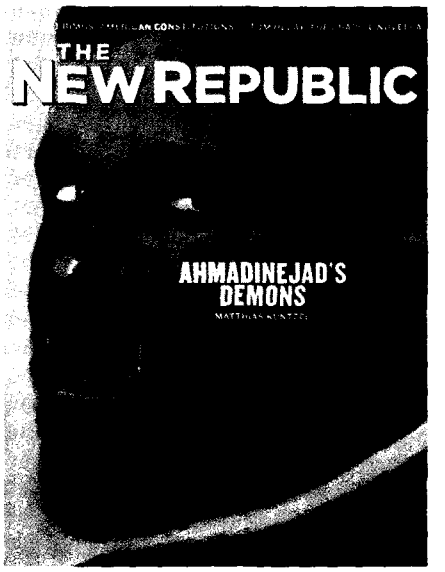
BOO TOOTH

THE COVER ART ASSOCIATED WITH Matthias Küntzel's article was grotesque; putting fangs on Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was sophomoric at best—though you guys were better than *National Review*—and racist at worst ("Ahmadinejad's Demons," April 24).

STEVE BOGDEN
Alexandria, Virginia



SHORT-WRITED

I AM IMPRESSED BY THE VIGOR WITH which Noam Scheiber defends failed ex-DNC staffers, short-term thinking, and—best of all—the insufficiently kissed ass of a big-money donor ("Scream II," April 24). It takes real courage to look at the electoral results of the last 20 years and take the side of those Democrats wishing to maintain the status quo.

JIM VORIS
Atlanta, Georgia

LANGUAGE LESSONS

IN HIS REVIEW OF *AMERICA'S CONstitution: A Biography*, Richard Primus writes that Akhil Reed Amar's "parsing of constitutional language is tendentious" ("In The Beginnings," April 24). But what can he mean when he says that the constitutional text "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof" denies "citizenship to those born in the United States who are not subject to American jurisdiction"? Who is born in the United States and not entitled to citizenship?

DONALD CLARKE
West Des Moines, Iowa

IF RECONSTRUCTION WAS A PIVOTAL event in American constitutional history—which, no doubt, it was—it was also a partial failure for the shocking reason that, after the revolutionary Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments were passed, half of the nation's adult population remained disenfranchised. As Primus notes in passing, Amar fails to acknowledge that glaring, anti-democratic historical fact. I have not read *America's Constitution*, but, according to Primus, Amar claims that, with the Reconstruction amendments, "real democracy triumphs." I would think this far too sweeping a conclusion given that, at the time, Congress, the state legislatures, and the courts were still refusing to recognize women as voters. Again, Primus summarizes Amar's view that "emancipation, equal protection, and enfranchisement democratize[d] the Constitution." In terms of enfranchisement, the Constitution was not democratized until 1920.

LOUISE W. KNIGHT
Evanston, Illinois

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RICHARD PRIMUS RESPONDS: Nineteenth-century courts took the view that not all persons born in the United States were "subject to the jurisdiction thereof" for the purposes of the Fourteenth Amendment. A leading example involves the status of Native Americans. In the 1880s, the Supreme Court held that many Native Americans were primarily subject to the jurisdiction of their unassimilated tribes and therefore were not American citizens, despite having been born within the geographical limits of the United States.

NUKE FLUKE

PETER BEINART IS RIGHT THAT THE burden of proof should be on the hawks who want to launch a preventive war against Iran ("Deterrent Defect," May 8). But he is dangerously wrong to mistake their superficially sober tone for hesitation on whether to strike. Instead, we see p.r. lessons from the Iraq war: Appear to act in sorrow, not in anger, and don't predict our bombs will be fêted with rose petals. This new tone has won the complicity even of Paris in the march toward war. It should fool no one about war's likelihood. Diplomacy may indeed fail if it consists of a few "carrots," and it will surely fail if it means mere hectoring, as the Bush administration practices. But a more serious initiative that addresses Israel's nuclear arsenal and our own nuclear policy (as required by Security Council Resolution 687 and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) would command international legitimacy and thus increase the diplomatic pressure on Iran. It is also the right thing to do.

Crisis-driven military adventure is also crisis-creating: If we focus only on Iran, we may meet our nuclear nemesis in Pakistan—or simply in our own use of these indefensible weapons. While Beinart is right to reaffirm nuclear deterrence, it must be a mere stepping stone to nuclear disarmament and, yes, abolition.

DAVID KEPPEL
Bloomington, Indiana

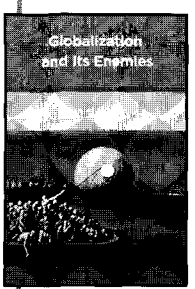
EDITORS' NOTE

"A Very Long Engagement" (May 15) should have credited its characterization of American evangelical activity in Sudan as a "sign of discipleship" to Allen Hertzke, who wrote about the subject in the October 2005 issue of *First Things* and in his book *Freeing God's Children*.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

"And Now for Some Facts" (May 8) stated that John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt's study, "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy," was supported by the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Although a version of the study is available through the Kennedy School's Faculty Research Working Paper Series, the Kennedy School did not provide funds for the study—nor does the study reflect the official view of the institution.

"The Shire" (May 15) says that, in Alan Ayckbourn's play trilogy *The Norman Conquests*, an adulterous affair is conducted in East Grinstead, England. While the trilogy's central plot involves a planned affair in the town, the trip does not actually take place. We regret the errors. ■



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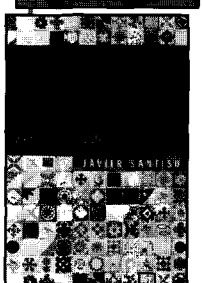

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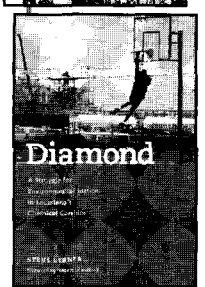

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Reform School

TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

FOUR DECADES AGO, THE historian Richard Hofstadter dubbed the era between the rise of populism and the end of the New Deal the "age of reform." Today, we are living through something rather different: the age of "reform." Social Security, Medicare, education, torts, taxes, welfare, campaign finance, earmarks, the military—we're "reforming" them all. "Reform," in today's Washington, has come to mean "change I like." Which is to say, it means almost nothing at all.

A word with such a noble pedigree deserves better. It is time for some linguistic discipline—a concerted effort to distinguish "reform" from mere change, in hopes of keeping it from suffering the fate of "frankly" and "my good friend"—words that years of Washington misuse have drained of virtually all meaning.

Start with the word itself. "Re-form"—there's an inherent tension. When you form something, you create something new. But the "re" suggests that you can't create something entirely new, because you're not on virgin terrain. Your efforts are framed by the existence, or at least the memory, of something old.

And that older thing has value. Implicit in the idea of reform is that something precious once existed. But, over time, it has been weakened, corroded, corrupted. The reformer does for society what the refurbisher does for paintings or the restorer does for houses—she uses new mechanisms to recapture a lost essence.

Think of the most famous "reformation"—the Protestant one. Martin Luther saw himself as stripping away layers of falsity and restoring the true church. Salafists like Osama bin Laden want to do the same—remove the innovations and impurities that have supposedly corrupted Islam. They use modern means—cell phones, laptops, jets—but their goal is the seventh century.

American history exhibits the same dynamic. The populists and progressives of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries feared that something precious was being lost. As Hofstadter writes, they hoped "to restore a type of economic individualism and political democracy that was widely believed to have existed earlier in America and to have been destroyed by the great corporation and the corrupt political machine." But, over time, they realized that recovering those old values would require different mechanisms. Originally devoted to local control, reformers embraced a stronger federal government, seeing it as the only way to prevent monopolies from crushing individual opportunity. And—originally fearful that the new, immigrant-dominated cities were inimical to democracy—they found ways to promote classically republican values in this unfamiliar milieu.

Which brings us to the "reforms" of today. Last year, Republicans proposed "reforming" Social Security. But Social Security's core purpose is social insurance—a guaranteed basic income for the elderly, regardless of how long they live or how wisely they invest. To fulfill that core function, Social Security does require reform: People retire later than they used to, for instance. But the Republican effort—giving people private market accounts, which could earn them more or less than Social Security does now—represents a fundamental deviation from the idea that government should protect people *from* markets by guaranteeing them a certain income when they get old.

Similarly, Republicans say they want to "reform" Medicare. But Medicare works on a similar principle: It guarantees the elderly a certain level of health care, regardless of their financial or physical condition. Conservative "reform" efforts erode this guarantee, generally by offering vouchers for private insurance that might be insufficient for seniors who are seriously ill. Like Social Security, Medicare protects against risk. The Republican "reforms," by contrast, introduce risk. Risk has its virtues—taking away the safety net may make people more responsible. But Republicans aren't safeguarding old values; they are introducing new ones.

Or take the tax system. In 1986, Congress genuinely reformed it. Over time, it had become jammed with special interest loopholes, which benefited some sectors of the economy over others. The progressive income tax was designed to be neutral between industries but not classes—the rich would pay a higher share of their income than the poor. In 1986, Congress stripped away layers of favoritism and re-equalized the tax system across industries. But it preserved progressivity between classes. Today, by contrast, when Republicans discuss tax "reform," they usually mean eliminating progressivity itself—through a flat tax or national sales tax. Such efforts may have their benefits, but they would not reform the graduated federal income tax established in 1913. They would violate its core principle.

Does that mean conservatives are never reformers? Some liberal historians have argued yes: that, in the American tradition, reform implies confronting private interests in pursuit of the public good. But, as conservatives have rightly pointed out, the market is not the only place private interests flourish. You can find them in the public sector, too. Think of how teachers' unions sometimes place their members' interests above those of students.

In fact, today's conservatives are reformers of the most fundamental kind. They want to overthrow Social Security, Medicare, and the progressive income tax because they want to reform the United States itself. They want to recreate what they sometimes call the "Tocquevillian" America of the nineteenth century—an America with a weak federal government that places few limits on business and offers few guarantees to individuals. Turn-of-the-century progressives saw strong government as a way to preserve core American values. But contemporary conservatives see the last century of government expansion largely as an encrustation that perverts the core values established in the Constitution.

This is truly radical reform—so radical that it almost crosses the line into "revolution." (A very unconservative word, but one that Newt Gingrich embraced in 1994 nonetheless.) But most conservatives today, unlike more honest predecessors like Calvin Coolidge or Barry Goldwater, won't admit it. Instead, they claim to be "reforming" the very progressive architecture that they revile. Politically, there's good reason for this subterfuge: Most Americans want a welfare state. But, linguistically, it's dishonest. To stop conservatives from reforming America, liberals need to reform "reform."

PETER BEINART

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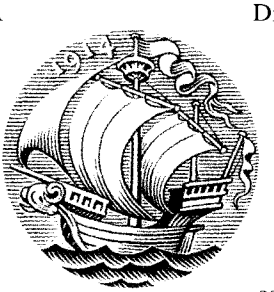
Hear Me Now

NANCY PELOSI, DARE we say, did something smart last week. She told her Democratic colleagues, several of whom have become enamored with the idea of impeaching the president, that, if their party gains control of Congress, impeachment is verboten. "We want oversight and checks and balances," Pelosi's flack told reporters. "Impeachment was never her interest."

These are dismal times for Republicans, and now they are even worse. Pelosi has effectively banished the specter of crazed Democrats returning to power to impeach President Bush, a handy bogeyman for Republican fund-raisers. The truth is, it is not impeachment Republicans fear; it's simply oversight. Since 2001, Congress has sat idle as the executive branch gradually proclaimed new powers for itself, and it has aided and abetted Bush's every failure by refusing to operate as a check on his administration. So, while Democrats are wise to distance themselves from the I-word, they shouldn't be bullied into abandoning promises to aggressively investigate the Bush administration. In fact, they should be running on the issue, not away from it.

GOP control of Congress deserves to end this year, not least because Republicans have abused—and then abandoned—government oversight. Six years of chasing every wild accusation leveled against the Clinton administration have been followed by almost six years of near-total deference to the executive branch. In the Clinton years, a single House committee, Government Reform, issued over 1,000 subpoenas and spent millions of dollars investigating the White House and the Democratic Party. More than two million pages of documents were handed over. In one inquiry alone—the grave matter of the politicization of the White House Christmas list—Republicans took 140 hours of testimony.

Nobody wants to return to those days—except perhaps to experience the sheer delight of watching a congressman solve the Vince Foster "murder" by shooting a pumpkin. But, in terms of congressional oversight, what has followed in the Bush years is even worse than the abuses of the Clinton years: nothing. Congress has brushed off the NSA's warrantless wiretapping program. In the rubber-stamp House of Representatives, the abuses at Abu Ghraib have merited a total of a dozen hours of sworn testimony. The use of propaganda by government agencies? A collective yawn from the GOP. The housing and urban development secretary's boast of denying federal grants to contractors who dislike Bush? Silence.



What oversight Republicans have performed has been woefully inadequate. As documented by *CQ Weekly* in 2004, nearly every time a Republican chairman promises to pursue an investigation, he suddenly loses interest once the cameras turn away. Pat Roberts, chairman of the Senate Select Intelligence Committee, once swore to "let the chips fall where they may" in his investigation of prewar intelligence. He then all but gave up on the probe until he was shamed into acting by Democrats. Even self-styled Republican mavericks have been timid. Richard Lugar once promised to use the Foreign Relations Committee to grill senior administration officials about their plan for Iraq. According to *CQ*, he "declared himself satisfied with lower-level administration witnesses after the higher-ranking ones he wanted refused to show." John McCain, the one Republican who tackled the Jack Abramoff investigation, essentially gave up on the inquiry once it started to threaten his party's pooh-bahs.

Other Republicans have turned their committees into ideological tools to curry favor with interest groups. Religious conservatives have been rewarded with hearings on the benefits of faith-based services. Oil companies have been granted investigations about the benefits of drilling in Alaska. Pharmaceutical companies got public testimony about the dangers of buying prescription drugs from Canada. Any subject seems to take precedence over the Bush administration. Among the topics on the agenda of the Government Reform Committee for this Congress are: "Diploma Mills," "New Dietary Guidelines," and "the federal government's migration to Internet Protocol version 6."

Republicans probably thought they were helping the president by abandoning oversight. But, facing no threat of congressional censure, the White House has had little incentive to govern more competently. The ultimate irony is that, after congressional Republicans have defended and protected the administration through all of its mistakes, voters may now take out their anger not on the president, but on his House and Senate enablers. If that happens, we say: Let the hearings begin. ■

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Bloggers 1, Mike McCurry 0.

Net Neuter

BY KEELIN MCDONELL

LOVE AFFAIRS BETWEEN the press corps and flacks are highly unusual, but they do happen. And, for years, Mike McCurry has been deeply involved in one. In January 1995, when Bill Clinton appointed the former State Department spokesman to press secretary, one of the White House's most high-profile (and high-pressure) positions, *The Washington Post* celebrated the arrival of "a jolly fellow" who had won "high marks from ... the media." *The New York Times* looked forward to the "equanimity and wit" that McCurry would bring to the White House briefing room. Even the Lewinsky scandal—"a press secretary's worst nightmare," in the words of one reporter—couldn't ruin his relationship with the press. "His easy humor and generally warm relations with the press," the *Times* wrote, "appear to be getting him through." During his four years explaining away Clintonite indiscretions large and small, McCurry inspired Howard Kurtz to give him an endearing nickname—"spin master"—and McCurry's beloved press sent him off to retirement with a round of heartfelt applause. "You leave with your honor intact," Sam Donaldson declared from an aisle seat in a briefing room crowded with well-wishers.

But, while McCurry's suavity with the press was legendary during the 1990s, it hasn't fared as well recently. In the last three weeks, he has been called, among other things, a "shill," a "joke," and a "wanker." His attempts to defend himself have fallen flat—a remarkable failure for a man who once turned a comparison to the Confederate army into a winning compliment. "Mike McCurry is in one of those tailspins of dishonesty and contradiction that is so wildly out of control, you just have to sit back, grab some popcorn, and watch with laughter," one critic recently quipped.

This hostile reception is not coming from the reporters who once cooed at McCurry during briefings and shared beer with him after hours. It's coming from the new breed of media that can't be winked and bantered into friendly coverage or charmed into passivity with a 21-ounce porterhouse at The Palm. While McCurry was busy reincarnating himself as a techno-communications whiz, the media universe went through a transformation of its own, birthing scads of unruly liberal bloggers that he seemed only dimly aware of. And McCurry seems to have understood their culture about as well as Karen Hughes did the Middle East's. Confident in his once glorious old-media taming skills, Washington's former ringmaster made the tragic mistake of confusing the blogosphere with the quaint world of the White House briefing room.

DAVID COWLES

MCCURRY'S TROUBLES STARTED on April 21, when an op-ed he co-authored appeared in *The Washington Times*, a go-to place for industry shills, opposing "net neutrality," or government regulation of the Internet. Since leaving the White House, McCurry had signed on as a partner at Public Strategies Washington, a consulting firm that specializes in telecommunications and international trade, among other fields. He regularly opines on telecom questions—usually in defense of the free-market, pro-business status quo—and his *Washington Times* piece was no exception:

> [R]egulation is offered in the name of consumers but really is anti-consumer, because it will discourage ... innovators and ultimately limit consumer choice.

Matt Stoller of the revered liberal blog *MyDD*—for "Direct Democracy"—disagrees. Just hours earlier, under the heading "MIKE MCCURRY AND ASTROTURFING NET NEUTRALITY," Stoller had scolded McCurry for serving as co-chair of an advocacy group called Hands Off the Internet and trading his political credibility for "the short-term interests of the telecommunications industry." (Bloggers, whose own Web presence would be threatened if unregulated telecom companies decided to charge to prioritize websites, largely want legislated oversight of the Internet.) Stoller confessed to having become "particularly saddened at what's become of Mike McCurry," especially in light of his idealistic past. "McCurry was in the eye of the storm as press secretary," he reminisced, "and handled a hostile press corps and a strange media environment with grace and kindness." The final blow was a harsh one: "[T]he world needs for him to turn into something other than a former Clintonista Do Nothing." Stoller's rhetoric was fiery, but the reaction was

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fairly restrained—a trickle of comments—because, as he noted, "telecom issues don't usually spark popular pressure."

There was one notable response, though: Two days later, McCurry showed up in *MyDD*'s comment section. Posting as "HandsOff CoChair1," he tried out some of his famous friendly spin. He noted that an unregulated Internet was "absolutely consistent with the Clinton Administration's policies." He promised Stoller that "writing Internet regulations is not the best way to promote online diversity." And he ended on a lighthearted note—"Look," he admitted, "I have to make a buck sure." ("Candor apparently doesn't get you very many points on the Internet," McCurry later told me.) Stoller, slightly less charmed by McCurry than, say, Andrea Mitchell, retaliated with another, more piquant post. "He's not principled," Stoller wrote. "He's just a paid shill in this fight."

That slap was enough to keep McCurry away from *MyDD*, but he couldn't let the insult drop. A week later, he resurfaced on *The Huffington Post*, the celebrity blogging site run by Arianna Huffington, in a decidedly less jovial mood. "You can see in blog commentary lots of great huffing and puffing," McCurry grumbled in a post partly devoted to the debased discourse of blogs. But even this didn't get it out of his system. Two days later, he reappeared, shooting off a misspelled, raging post: Bloggers are ruining journalism because they make reporters "feel intimindated [*sic*] and [that] they lack public support."

The bloggers smelled blood: Within hours, they unleashed a torrent of snarky attacks on McCurry. (The blog search engine site Technorati tallies over 1,800 posts about McCurry.) Stoller accused him of "frothing and well-paid incoherence." David Sirota seethed that McCurry was "pathological, infantile and dishonest." Josh Marshall at *Talking Points Memo* puzzled over McCurry's blogging and concluded, "I really have no idea what he's talking about." *Atrios* took him to task for "treating [his] audience as idiots while making dishonest arguments." On May 3, McCurry posted one last desperate entry on *The Huffington Post*—"WHITHER INTERNET 2.0?" "Do we want the web to be a place where you only get attention if you call people names first?" he plaintively asked.

Stoller isn't done, though. Since McCurry last wrote on *The Huffington Post*, the *MyDD* blogger has added three more McCurry-related entries: "EVEN MORE BAD FAITH FROM MIKE MCCURRY," "MIKE MCCURRY: MORE ON US BEING INTERNET RABBLE," and, finally, "CLINTON WH ALUMNI: WTF?" (or "what the fuck?" in bloggerese). "Traditional media tactics," Stoller says, by way of explaining McCurry's faux pas, "can cause problems" in the blogosphere. McCurry, for his part, has finally realized that blogging is less like a witty exchange with Sam Donaldson and more, as he now puts it, like "a primal scream in the darkness." He checks out *Daily Kos* and other blogs "occasionally," and he admits he should, maybe, have known better. "I knew when I went into the blogosphere and took the argument on that I'd be asking for trouble," McCurry says. "I just didn't know how much trouble." ■

Our myopic spooks.

Under Analysis

BY SPENCER ACKERMAN

GENERAL MICHAEL HAYDEN, the president's nominee to head the CIA, is in for a grilling this week. But the expected flaying doesn't have anything to do with the CIA. Instead, the Senate is eager to use his confirmation hearings to investigate the National Security Agency's controversial warrantless wiretapping program and its creation of a database for tens of millions of domestic phone calls—both programs that Hayden approved when he headed the secretive spy outfit. Already, several Republicans have suggested that Hayden isn't the right man to lead a CIA in crisis.

But, if Hayden's Capitol overseers are wary, his troops-to-be are ecstatic. Over his 19-month tenure, Hayden's much-loathed predecessor, Porter Goss, turned the agency from a wilderness of mirrors into a vale of tears, firing longtime operatives for insufficient political fealty to President Bush and unapproved chats with reporters. The reaction to Goss's departure—and presumably that of his lackeys, whom longtime CIA officials derisively termed "the Gosslings"—has been nothing less than gleeful. "Thank God," says Buzzy Krongard, the CIA's former number-three man, who quit in 2004 over Goss's political strong-arming. "He set the agency way, way back. His legacy is certainly not one he should be proud of. Porter was very ill-served by his staff."

By contrast, Hayden's nomination—and the selection as his deputy of Steve Kappes, a beloved case officer whom Goss forced out—has signaled that the CIA is set for a long-overdue revival. After all, Hayden currently serves as the right-hand man to John Negroponte, the first-ever director of national intelligence. Putting Hayden in charge of Langley, the thinking goes, is a vote of confidence in the CIA from the new intelligence czar—and an overdue olive branch from a White House that has used the agency as a scapegoat for its foreign misadventures. "I am very strongly a fan of both Mike Hayden and Steve Kappes," gushes John Brennan, a longtime CIA official who, until last year, headed the National Counterterrorism Center. "I've been critical of some of the administration's actions in the intelligence arena previously, but this shows much better thought and planning."

In backing Hayden, Negroponte's primary goal is to revitalize the agency's much-derided human intelligence, or "humint," capability—the classic spycraft of infiltrating shadowy terrorist cells, stealing secrets, and recruiting spies. According to Negroponte, "the CIA must remain the intelligence community's premier human intelligence agency."

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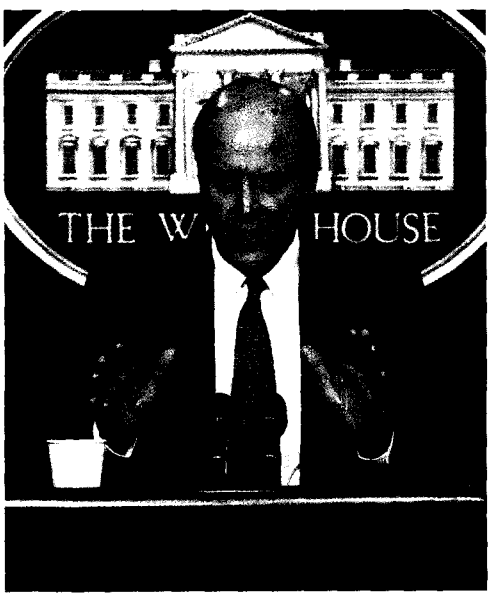
That's a good thing, but CIA veterans might want to hold their applause. Negroponte's enthusiasm for espionage is not matched by his enthusiasm for the CIA's other mission: analyzing the meaning of the information it collects. Indeed, Negroponte has spent his 13 months as director filching analysts from the CIA for his own office. Worse, he's changed the agency's focus to short-term analysis at the expense of peering over the horizon to forecast future threats. Of course, after Iraq, there has been little dispute that the agency's crystal ball needs a vigorous polishing, but Negroponte has been doing more harm than good. And Hayden's nomination shows that he has no intention of stopping.

SINCE SEPTEMBER 11, a procession of high-profile commissions impaneled to scrutinize the CIA emphasized that the agency needs to improve its spying capabilities. But, while no one disagrees that better human intelligence is essential to, say, averting the next train bombing, such information rarely illuminates the broader context of the threats the U.S. faces—where the next jihadist sanctuary will emerge, for example. That's a job for analysis: taking the available data and explaining its implications. At its best, CIA analysis reveals truths concealed in plain sight, as with a famous piece of ignored analysis from August 6, 2001, titled, "Bin Ladin Determined to Strike in U.S." Of course, CIA analysis has hardly been at its best recently, as when it concluded that Saddam Hussein had large stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons. But, rather than strengthening the agency's weakened analytic limb, Negroponte seems intent on amputating it. An "emerging scenario," according to Steven Aftergood, an intelligence expert at the Federation of American Scientists, is "the dismemberment of the CIA and its reduction to the humint function."



Negroponte announces Hayden's nomination.

Over the last several months, Negroponte has steadily exerted more and more control over analysis. Among his first acts as director of national intelligence was to make himself, and not Goss, responsible for Bush's daily intelligence briefing, which is now compiled by Negroponte's personal analyst, Thomas Fingar, a State Department veteran. Then, Negroponte took the National Intelligence Council (NIC), the intelligence community's long-range think tank, out of Langley and incorporated it into his own office. Perhaps most significantly, he has been appropriating CIA analysts for his own use. According to *Time*, about 90 analysts have slowly migrated from the CIA to Negroponte's office, and even more have gone into the new community-wide centers for high-priority subjects like terrorism and weapons proliferation.

This shift is motivated in part by simple institutional interest. Negroponte is responsible for briefing the president, but he started his job with few analysts reporting directly to him. Negroponte, after all, may be the head of the intelligence community, but he doesn't actually run any of its 16 agencies. (By contrast, the old director of central intelligence, or DCI, was also head of the CIA.) Mark Lowenthal, a senior CIA analyst until last year, explains the resulting dynamic this way: "[Former Deputy DCI] John McLaughlin put it best when he said, 'Do you know why the DCI relies so heavily on the CIA? It's the only agency that says, "Yes, sir" when he asks them to do something. Everybody else says, "I'll get back to you."' So, now, Negroponte is in that situation."

The appropriation of analysts may seem like mundane bureaucratic reshuffling. But Negroponte isn't just moving analysts from one office to another. He's also changing how they work. Analysis, say veterans, is becoming the study of the day's events rather than of the broader trend—the trees instead of the forest. "Their time horizons are very short," says Greg Treverton, a former NIC vice-chairman now at the Rand Corporation. "[Y]ou ask them, 'What about these longer-term questions, like how Al Qaeda is morphing?' They say, 'That's a great question. I wish we could do something on it, but we just don't have time.'" The CIA, apparently with Negroponte's approval, even eliminated the agency's premier center for long-range forecasting, the Strategic Assessments Group. While CIA spokesman Tom Crispell says there has been "no analytic capability lost," Robert Hutchings, the NIC chairman from 2003 to 2005, calls it "a retrograde step," noting that the group "did some of the most imaginative and strategic thinking in all of government."

Perhaps the biggest change has come to the NIC itself. Before coming under Negroponte's wing, the NIC was responsible for comprehensive analysis that drew on data from across the intelligence community, either in the form of the (supposedly) authoritative National Intelligence Estimates or reports like 2004's "Mapping the Global Future," which dealt with high-altitude questions like the effect of increasing religiosity on the territorial and political ambitions of Muslim states. Now, the NIC is becoming Negroponte's analytical shop, lending its focus to what the director needs to know in preparation for his next Bush briefing or National Security Council meeting. "This has become almost a total preoccupation for the NIC," says Hutchings.

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"What this will mean under any configuration is that the NIC is no longer as able to do long-range analysis."

And, for Hutchings, the correlation between short-term analysis and the recent U.S. strategic blunders is unmistakable. "This administration has really undermined strategic analysis and strategic policy-making," he says. "You look at the course of our involvement in Iraq. It has just been ad-libbing from almost the time main combat stopped." Nor is that happening by accident, he continues: "The administration has allowed strategic analytic capacity to erode because it doesn't *want* strategic analysis. It wants isolated facts and narrow analysis that it can draw upon to support its preferred policies."

THERE'S NOT A soul in Washington who would disagree with the proposition that the U.S. needs better spying. (Treverton quips, "That and the tooth fairy get you a quarter.") But analysts are often seen as subordinate partners in the intelligence world—or, in the Bush era, disloyal ones. And, as laudatory as Hayden and Kappes's focus on humint may be, it also risks exacerbating the intelligence community's analytical decline. Says Lowenthal, "You can argue about whether or not they get it right all the time, which is a stupid argument—they don't, nobody does. But [CIA analysis] is the main analytical strength of the intelligence community. So you can't eviscerate it." For that reason, he's skeptical that Hayden or Kappes will actually further diminish the role of the agency's analysts. But not everyone is as convinced. "If there's a vision," says Treverton, "it seems like the vision for the CIA at play now is like the conception of the [CIA's] Counterterrorist Center: primarily dominated by operators," with analysts helping simply to pick their targets. And, by all accounts, Hayden has been Negroponte's key partner in that vision. "Negroponte apparently has confidence in him," says longtime defense wonk John Pike, "and must regard him as an effective manager who can be trusted to do the right thing without being watched all the time."

The irony—and possibly the tragedy—is that all these moves were ostensibly designed to improve analysis. After both the Senate Intelligence Committee and the Robb-Silberman Commission blasted the CIA for "groupthink" that led to a disastrously wrong picture of Iraq's WMD capabilities, Negroponte said his shake-up of the CIA would make the country less vulnerable to a deadly surprise. And, clearly, the agency needed to do something differently to avoid further catastrophic errors. But grinding analysis to the smallest bore makes it more, not less, likely to miss the next threat. Hayden's hearing will be dominated by the controversy over his warrantless surveillance at the NSA. His vision of analysis at Langley will surely be an afterthought at most. As happy as analysts have been to see Goss go, they may end up finding what comes after him is worse. Maybe they should have seen that coming, too. ■

The Christian right moves left.

Base Running

BY AMY SULLIVAN

RICK SANTORUM HAS enough trouble in his reelection race. The incumbent GOP senator has trailed his opponent, Pennsylvania State Treasurer Bob Casey, by double digits almost since Casey declared his candidacy. Santorum's campaign has been mired in questions about why Pennsylvanians pay to homeschool his six children in Virginia and about his involvement with the now-infamous K Street Project. Even Republicans have privately started to refer to Santorum's campaign as a lost cause and are lobbying party leaders to shift money to more promising contests. Santorum surely never thought that, in the midst of all this, he'd have to worry about his vote against the 2005 Climate Stewardship Act, an effort to cap greenhouse gas emissions.

And, yet, witness the scene at Messiah College last month. If Santorum, a devout Catholic who has distinguished himself by leading the fight against so-called "partial-birth" abortion, should have felt safe in any venue in the state, it was at the tiny Christian school nestled against farmland in the rolling hills of conservative south-central Pennsylvania. But, when the college convened a screening of *The Great Warming*—a documentary on climate change narrated by Alanis Morissette and Keanu Reeves—and invited Casey and Santorum to attend a follow-up panel discussion with Richard Cizik of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), the senator declined. It was probably a wise choice. When the lights came up in the auditorium, panelist Joseph Sheldon, a Messiah biology professor, tore into the senator, accusing him of selling out the environment to business interests. Question after question from the packed hall attacked Santorum's votes against the Kyoto Accord and for drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

It could have been the sort of thing that merited only a mild raise of the eyebrow—the fact that evangelicals care about the environment isn't news anymore, and besides, everyone knows that it's the more controversial sexual issues that drive their votes. But, in Pennsylvania, global warming is the *deciding* issue for some evangelicals. Both Casey and Santorum are pro-life, which neutralizes the abortion factor, and the NAE has made the Keystone State the testing ground for a new strategy—one that favors not the hot-button issues of abortion and gay marriage, which have traditionally helped Republican candidates, but other causes

Amy Sullivan, a contributing editor at THE WASHINGTON MONTHLY, *is writing a book about religion and the left.*

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on the evangelical agenda that more closely track with Democratic positions. "There's going to be a lot of political reconsideration on this in the coming year," Cizik told me. "The old faultlines are no more."

In recent years, Democrats haven't viewed the evangelical community as the most fertile ground for political efforts and policy conversations—and with good reason. The past three decades have been characterized by an increasingly close relationship between evangelical organizations and the Republican Party. The two sides snapped into almost perfect alignment during the 2000 campaign, and, in the last election, 78 percent of white evangelicals voted for George W. Bush, thanks in large measure to big voter registration efforts—by groups like Focus on the Family and the Christian Coalition—that aimed to sign up only Republican voters. Christian right organizations also distributed millions of voter-education guides that highlighted differences between the two parties (on issues like abortion, gay marriage, and prayer in schools) and left no doubt about which party or candidate held the "right" positions.

White evangelicals have become such a crucial part of the GOP base that many political observers now see them as the key to Republican victories at the polls. Karl Rove certainly seems to agree. He left his policy position at the White House last month partly to repair relationships with conservative evangelical leaders who are disappointed that the president they helped elect twice has given them nothing (two Supreme Court justices aside) in return. When these old-guard members of the Christian right supported Bush in 2000, they thought they would get a president who would fight tirelessly to outlaw sexual immorality.

But Rove is also reportedly worried about another group of evangelicals: the nearly 40 percent who identify themselves as politically moderate and who are just as likely to get energized about AIDS in Africa or melting ice caps as partial-birth abortion and lesbian couples in Massachusetts. These evangelicals have found the White House even less open to their concerns than their more conservative brethren have.

They have also been aggravated by the refusal of the Christian right's old guard to embrace new causes like the environment and global poverty. The American Catholic community faced this problem in the 1980s, when some bishops wanted to pursue an "abortion first" strategy while others promoted what Joseph Cardinal Bernardin called a "seamless garment of life" that included issues like the death penalty and nuclear proliferation. Bernardin and his supporters effectively lost that struggle within the bishops' conference, ending the debate for Catholics. The evangelical world, however, is different. There is no single leader or institution that dictates policy for all churches and congregants, so, if moderate evangelicals want to broaden their religious agenda, it doesn't really matter if conservatives like James Dobson or Chuck Colson disagree.

Enter the big-tent NAE, an organization that represents 59 denominations with 45,000 churches and 30 million members across the country—a formidable bloc of potential voters. For the past four years, Cizik, the group's vice president for governmental affairs, has led an effort to raise evangelical awareness about what he calls "creation care"—the idea that God gave man responsibility for looking after the Earth when He told Adam, in Genesis 2:15, to "watch over" the Garden of Eden "and care for it." One of Cizik's favorite lines is that, when he dies, God isn't going to ask him, "Rich, how did I create the Earth?" but "Rich, what did you do to protect that which I created?"

An evangelical who suggests that intelligent design is not the most important political debate of the moment isn't going to be popular with everyone on the Christian right. And, in fact, the old guard has targeted the creation-care initiative, pressuring the NAE to muzzle its own policy statement on climate change. But, while Cizik hasn't succeeded in making friends with Dobson, he has moved public opinion—63 percent of evangelicals in a March survey released by the Evangelical Environmental Network agreed that global warming is an immediate concern. Which is how a Democrat and an evangelical found themselves sitting on the same stage at Messiah College—not arguing about abortion, but agreeing about the environment.

Nor is the Santorum-Casey race unique. In Ohio's Fifteenth District, both Republican Representative Deborah Pryce and her Democratic opponent are pro-choice. In past years, evangelicals would have skipped this race in favor of supporting pro-life candidates in other districts. But this time, with abortion once again canceling out, the environment has become a key mobilizing issue for moderates, who abhor Pryce's record (she holds a measly 6 percent rating from the League of Conservation Voters).

It's hard to know how all of this will influence this year's elections. But the symbolic value of the Messiah event has the potential to change the political topography. While the NAE may not turn out large numbers of its rank-and-file for Democrats, their praise helps blunt Republican attacks. For years, Rove and his ilk have attempted to scare up evangelical voters by crudely portraying Democrats as agents of cultural decay. Those attacks, however, will be far less effective if Democrats can point to the likes of the NAE and its ministers as proof of their faith-friendly bona fides.

Whether Democrats take advantage of this turning point remains to be seen. At the local level, they have made a good start, with unprecedented efforts by state parties to reach out to evangelicals. Following the example of newly elected Virginia Governor Tim Kaine, some Democratic candidates have launched ads on religious radio stations, and state party leaders have met with evangelical and Catholic leaders to "clear the air." In some cases, these gatherings represent the first time the two groups have ever sat

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down with each other. While Democrats know they won't win over conservative evangelicals, they realize there is an advantage to improving their image in the broader religious community. "You don't have to convert everybody; you just have to take the edge off," one state party leader explained. "Now that they've met me, they can see I don't have two horns and a tail."

Unfortunately, this enthusiasm in the states has not yet been matched by support from the national party. In part, that's because many professional Democrats continue to believe that evangelicals aren't "their" voters—or they confuse evangelicals with fundamentalists and so assume the whole demographic is out of reach. These assumptions may explain the general tone-deafness with which some leaders approach evangelicals. In the summer of 2005, an unnamed party official explained Democratic outreach to evangelicals this way to *U.S. News and World Report*: "We're dealing with a serious bloc of people, not just crazies with big Bibles." Imagine Ken Mehlman explaining Republican outreach to black voters by saying, "These are not just lazy high school dropouts."

When Howard Dean attempted to make things better in an interview with the Christian Broadcasting Network, he just made them worse. Tellingly, if unintentionally, he distinguished Democrats from Christians: "We [Democrats] have an enormous amount in common with the Christian community and particularly with the evangelical Christian community." And he bobbled the answer to repeated questions about the Democratic National Committee's (DNC) evangelical outreach efforts. First, Dean responded by mentioning that his chief of staff, Leah Daughtry, is a Pentecostal minister. Then, sensing that was insufficient, he named some black and Hispanic religious leaders with whom he had met as part of a "vigorous outreach program." Officially, the DNC has a name for this program: the "Faith in Action Initiative." Alas, that initiative—which Daughtry describes as a way "to help state parties develop faith outreach programs"—has done little to actually help state efforts, at least according to the handful of party chairs I called. And, while the party has hired a staffer to oversee outreach to black churches and is searching for another to meet with Catholics, there are no plans to hire a counterpart for white evangelicals.

After the panel discussion at Messiah College ended, the evangelicals who had filled the auditorium seemed cautiously impressed by Casey. Whether that translates into Democratic votes this fall may depend on what the party does to solicit them. One thing is for sure: Evangelicals are looking at Santorum with new eyes. The senator said he turned down the NAE's invitation to Messiah because of a previous commitment. And an important commitment it was. That evening, TV cameras caught him at Citizens Bank Park cheering on the Phillies. Once, Santorum might have been able to take the evangelical vote for granted. But, if he'd watched *The Great Warming*, he'd know: The climate is changing. ■

Atlanta Postcard

Black Ball

BY JASON ZENGERLE

LATE ONE NIGHT in 2001, Curtis Brown was finishing up some work in his office at a car dealership in suburban Atlanta, fiddling with the tuner on his radio in the hope of finding a ball game to make the time pass more quickly, when he stumbled upon something he'd never heard before—or, to be more precise, something he'd never heard before *on the radio*. Because what Brown heard that night was actually, to his ears at least, quite familiar. It was a raucous, freewheeling discussion about sports in which no topic was considered taboo and no observation was deemed out of bounds. It was the type of no-holds-barred sports talk Brown had grown up hearing at the local barbershop in his native Detroit; and it was the type of sports talk he now often participated in with his friends in Atlanta when they gathered in bars or basements to watch games. But, until that moment, it was not the type of sports talk Brown had ever heard on the airwaves. "It was real, it was down to earth, it wasn't about statistics, it wasn't afraid to say the stuff most people think but a lot of the time won't ever actually say," Brown recalls. "It was totally different from any other sports radio format, and I've been listening to sports talk shows for a long time." In other words, he explains, "It was black guys"—black guys like Brown and his friends—"talking about sports."

The black guys Brown heard that night were Doug and Ryan Stewart, two brothers (in both senses of the word) who had recently persuaded the management of Atlanta's sports talk station 790 The Zone to put them on the air. Between the two of them, the Stewarts had scant radio experience: the then-31-year-old Doug was a mortgage lender; Ryan, who is three years younger, had played football at Georgia Tech and, since retiring from the sport after five years in the NFL, had done some fill-in work at the station. But the Stewarts did possess an undeniable chemistry—the kind that can take years for a radio duo to build but tends to come naturally to two guys who grew up under the same roof—and they had a convincing demographic argument for why they deserved some airtime. "Atlanta's about 70 percent black, and a good percentage of those black people love sports," Doug remembers telling 790's program director. "But there's no sports talk show in Atlanta—or anywhere else, for that matter—that specifically speaks to them."

The powers that be at 790 were intrigued by the Stewarts and their idea for a "hip-hop" sports talk show, so they gave them a tryout in the graveyard shift—when few people bothered to listen to 790 and even those who wanted to listen (like night owls working late at car dealerships) had a

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hard time doing so, since the station's AM signal became extremely weak after sundown. It wasn't long into their first show that 790's management realized that, in the Stewart brothers—or, as they called themselves and their show, the "2 Live Stews"—the station had a hit. "There was no question," says Andrew Saltzman, 790's president. "Hearing them that first time—their cadence, their vernacular, their energy—was like jumping in an ice pool."

The Stews have come a long way in the four and a half years since their late-night debut. While they did their first shows for free, today they both pull down six-figure salaries. And, after moving "2 Live Stews" into a succession of increasingly better timeslots, last year 790 took the ultimate step and installed the Stews in sports talk Valhalla—otherwise known as afternoon drive. Earlier this year, the Stews extended their reach beyond Atlanta when the black media company Radio One began syndicating their show as part of its national black talk-radio network (the network's two other shows feature Al Sharpton and Michael Eric Dyson); today, "2 Live Stews" is heard in more than 25 markets. In the process, the Stews have become sports celebrities—even earning a profile in *Sports Illustrated*. In February, when they broadcast their radio show from the NBA All-Star game—an event so popular among African Americans that *Washington Post* sports columnist Michael Wilbon once called it "Black Thanksgiving"—the duo sometimes received as much attention from the fans as the players. That the Stews bested the likes of Shaquille O'Neal and the rap star Ludacris at an All-Star weekend celebrity pool tournament only seemed a fitting confirmation of their new cachet.

But, for all the distance the Stews have traveled in the last few years, there is one thing that has not changed since their first night on the air: Despite its tremendous success, "2 Live Stews" remains the only sports talk show in the United States—and there are now more than 500 of them—that features two black hosts and is explicitly geared toward black listeners. Which almost certainly has something to do with the other thing that makes the Stews such a sports talk anomaly. The world of sports is routinely hailed as an oasis of colorblind meritocracy and racial harmony, but the most common racial dynamic is a group of black players taking orders from a white coach as they play for a team owned by a white guy. Most members of the sports media typically suppress the tensions that come with this reality or deny that they exist. The Stews, on the other hand, make their living by bringing them to light.

LIKE EVERY "2 Live Stews" show, this one begins with a jolt—a sonic collage that features an old Public Enemy song, snippets of dialogue from movies like *Bad Boys* and *Barbershop*, and, of course, the Stews themselves. "You're in the doooooooog house!" Doug yells into his microphone, as Ryan barks and growls into his own. The Stews—both wearing sweatsuits, both with shaved heads, and both sporting large diamond stud earrings—are seated at opposite ends of an elliptical console in a studio on the eighteenth floor of an office building in the upscale Atlanta suburb of Buckhead. Through a window in front of them, they can see their producer in the control room; through a window behind them, they have a view of Stone Mountain.

After their ear-shattering introduction and some words of greeting for the "dogs" and "poodles" (which is what they call their male and female listeners), the Stews turn to the big news of the day, which, on this particular afternoon, involves Michael Vick, the hometown Falcons' supremely talented but maddeningly inconsistent quarterback. Vick, who recently finished a disappointing season, has decided to voice his frustration to the press, telling a reporter with *USA Today* that the Falcons' offensive coordinator doesn't know how to use him properly. And the majority of Atlanta's sports talk community—both the hosts and the callers—has reacted predictably, blasting Vick for refusing to listen to authority; for airing the team's dirty laundry in public; for being, in the parlance of the medium, a "malcontent," a "brat," and an "uncoachable punk."

But that is not the view of the Stews. In their eyes, Vick is the victim and the Falcons' coaches are the bad guys. And they spend the next hour making that case. According to Doug, the Falcons' coaching staff really isn't using Vick properly. Rather than taking advantage of Vick's blazing speed and remarkable running ability, they're trying to force him to become something he's not—namely a conventional, drop-back passer who stays in the pocket. Ryan isn't sold on Doug's notion that Vick can be an option quarterback like he was in college, but he doesn't fault Vick for going public with his grievance. That the quarterback did so, Ryan argues, only means that the coaching staff wasn't taking his concerns seriously. In effect, Vick had no alternative but to go to the press. And, because Vick is black and the Falcons' offensive coordinator is white, the whole situation becomes, in the Stews' retelling, a thinly veiled parable about race in America—in which a stodgy white system once again conspires to thwart a creative black talent. Even the statistical measure used to assess quarterbacks—something called the "passer rating"—is biased against a multi-dimensional player like Vick, Doug argues, since it fails to take into account the yards he gains by running.

This sort of racial talk goes on constantly on "2 Live Stews." Often, it's lighthearted and frivolous—such as when it involves making fun of white athletes for being slow or detailing the differences between white strip clubs and black ones. (In case you're curious, Ryan explains thusly: "Black strip clubs, the girls dance a whole lot more and shake it a whole lot more. White strip clubs, the girls model more and walk around more. Silicone has a lot to do with it, too.") But, just as frequently, the racial talk can be serious—and it's at its most serious when the topic is the athletes themselves, who, after all, are predominately black.

Where most sports talk shows consist of angry white hosts and angry white callers braying about the myriad

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shortcomings of these black athletes, "2 Live Stews" features the reverse: black hosts and black callers voicing sympathy, understanding, and support for the black people who play the games. When they're not defending Vick, the Stews and the dogs and poodles are defending former Ohio State running back Maurice Clarett, who was generally vilified on sports talk shows for leaving school early and then accusing Ohio State of NCAA violations but who, according to the Stews' portrayal, was a young black man who'd won a national championship for Ohio State only to be abandoned by the university when he ran into problems off the field. Or they're sticking up for Barry Bonds or Terrell Owens or whichever black athlete happens to be serving as a sports talk punching bag at that moment. "When everyone else is saying that this guy is crazy or that this guy is a jerk, we're usually the only ones on radio viewing it the other way," Doug says.

This pro-athlete view, Ryan argues, stems from the fact that he and Doug—who also played football at the college level—are themselves athletes. But the sports talk landscape is littered with ex-jocks now trying to make a second career talking about the game they once played, which means that something else must account for the Stews' unusual dynamic. And Doug, the more avowedly political of the duo, isn't afraid to put his finger on it. "It's also because we're black," he says of his, his brother's, and his callers' propensity to see things from the athlete's perspective. Later, he adds, "I just think that, deep down, we feel like the setup is on. I don't know if it's a conspiracy or it's because we've been wronged so many times by authority—and when I say authority I mean the system, the establishment, the sports hierarchy."

Indeed, the figures who typically come in for the most criticism during a "2 Live Stews" show are the people who sit atop that hierarchy: the coaches, the general managers, the athletic directors, and the league commissioners, who tend to be white and who, on most other sports talk shows, tend to be treated like minor deities. According to the Stews' schema, these deities have feet of clay: Dick Vermeil, the former pro football coach who was widely hailed in the media for wearing his emotions on his sleeve, is a crybaby and the butt of frequent jokes; Larry Brown, who before his bad turn with the New York Knicks was celebrated as a coaching genius for winning an NBA championship with the Detroit Pistons, is a glory hound stealing the spotlight from his players. The Stews even take shots at David Stern, the NBA commissioner whose stewardship of that league has made him as close to a universally revered figure as you're likely to find in professional sports. When the NBA instituted a dress code for its players, the Stews argued that Stern was unfairly targeting the league's young black players, who, prior to the dress code, tended to wear the sort of hip-hop gear the Stews themselves favor. "Who's the dress code made for?" Doug asks. "It's not made for Mike Dunleavy [a white player], it's not made for, I don't know, give me another white player. So deductive reasoning would tell you that it's directed toward this certain group of people who make white folks uncomfortable."

None of which is to say that the Stews don't ever try to make athletes uncomfortable. "If a black athlete does something crazy," says Doug, "we're going to call them out on it." Ricky Williams, for instance—who was recently suspended from the NFL for violating its substance abuse policy—is the butt of many a "2 Live Stews" pothead joke. But, when the Stews do criticize athletes, it's usually done in the spirit of tough, almost brotherly, love. Saltzman actually likens the treatment of athletes on "2 Live Stews" to Doug and Ryan's treatment of each other. "It's like I can take shots at my brother that nobody else can take," Saltzman says. "I'm going to be harder on him than anybody else, but, at the end of the day, I'm going to be the one defending him in a street fight."

THE STEWS LIKE to say that their show is simply a re-creation of what happens when men get together in person to watch and talk about sports. But, no matter how exact that re-creation is, sometimes people want the real thing, and so, with some regularity, the Stews give away tickets to local sporting events and then join the winners. On this night, the Stews are at the Philips Arena to watch the Atlanta Hawks in a section of seats the team has specially reserved for the Stews and their fans called the Dog Pound. (The Stews' seat-giveaway arrangement with Atlanta's pro hockey team, the Thrashers, is called "Soul On Ice.")

The Hawks reside near the bottom of the NBA standings and the arena is largely listless and empty, but the Dog Pound, although only filled with about a dozen people, is a comparable den of activity. Vendors and security guards make their way to the section to say hello to the Stews, who spend most of the game schmoozing with their fans and offering a running commentary on the action on the court. It's almost identical to the commentary they offer on the air—albeit with curse words—and much of it is hilarious. But it's not without its moments of insight, and, in the game's final moments, one such moment occurs. With the Hawks trailing by three and setting up for a final shot during a time-out, the Stews and their fans all agree that a sharp-shooting rookie named Salim Stoudamire should take the last shot. But when the Hawks return to the floor, Stoudamire is sitting on the bench. The Stews and their fans are incredulous. "Where's Salim?" they howl. And, when the Hawks miss the shot and go on to lose the game, the howls grow louder. Doug merely shakes his head. "Salim's gonna be pissed," he says. "I wouldn't want to be in that locker room right now."

Sure enough, Stoudamire will pitch a fit in the locker room that night—according to some reports, he'll have to be physically restrained from attacking the Hawks' coach—and, the next day, he'll be suspended for two games for conduct detrimental to the team. The sports talk universe will have another misbehaving, entitled athlete to excoriate. And "2 Live Stews" will have yet another poor, misunderstood athlete to defend. ■

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Ehud Olmert's vision for Israel.

Virtually Normal

BY GADI TAUB

JUST AS LYNDON JOHNSON coasted to the presidency on the blessed memory of John F. Kennedy, Ehud Olmert's ascension to Israel's highest office occurred at a moment rife with both sorrow and warm nostalgia for a very recent past. The Camelot to which Olmert laid claim was the last year of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's reign, when the great militarist reversed his lifelong course and withdrew Israel from Gaza. During this past winter's campaign, Olmert choreographed appearances so that large images of Sharon hovered above him. His ads featured photos of himself at Sharon's side, and they announced that he would follow "Sharon's way."

The campaign demanded modesty from Olmert, who had served as Sharon's deputy prime minister and, more or less, stumbled into his politically propitious position. Photographs captured him running Cabinet meetings seated next to Sharon's glaringly empty, big chair. Among friends, however, before Sharon's physical collapse, he would allow himself—at least for humor's sake—to slip into a less modest mode. Claiming credit for his boss' dramatic ideological turnabout, he would joke, "Well, who do you think pushed the fat guy?"

Modesty aside, Olmert did "push the fat guy." Mostly, he importuned behind closed doors. Then, on December 5, 2003, he gave Sharon a large public shove during an interview with Nahum Barnea, the dean of Israeli political journalism at *Yedioth Ahronoth*, the country's largest daily. The headline of the resulting story trumpeted "OLMERT GETS OUT OF THE TERRITORIES." Given Olmert's history of hawkishness, one had to rub one's eyes, as Barnea quipped in the piece. Was he really proposing unilateral evacuation from Gaza and the West Bank? Didn't Labor urge a Gaza pullout in the 2003 campaign? And hadn't Sharon pummeled it? Olmert discoursed at length on demography. Jews, he argued, are fast becoming a minority between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. And, since a permanent occupation—de facto apartheid—was neither desirable nor possible, and since renouncing the democratic form of government is out of the question, Israel must evacuate the territories to preserve its Jewish democratic character.

Sharon was sick with the flu when Olmert gave the interview. After he read it in the paper, the prime minister called Olmert from home. As it was later reported, Sharon treated his right-hand man to a dose of his famous sarcasm. "Where are you?" asked Sharon on the phone. "I'm home," said Olmert. "Is your home still on our side, or did you already give it to them?" They both chuckled. "In any case," Sharon said, "I'm recovered now, so you can take a break from running the state."

This was very much Sharon's style. He made you laugh. But when you were done laughing, you were left wondering where you actually stood. And, in Olmert's case, he had good reason to be unsure. Though he probably knew Sharon was ruminating over withdrawal, at least from Gaza, he went beyond that, and his freelancing could have cost him his career. But, by the end of their conversation, Sharon reportedly suggested they sit and have a serious talk about Olmert's proposal. Less than a month later, the prime minister astounded Israel and announced he would unilaterally move out of Gaza.

THOUGH SHARON AND Olmert are both longtime hawks, and though both experienced a sharp political conversion, they are very different characters, belonging to very different generations. Sharon, 77 years old, always harbored a dark and tragic view of life—haunted by a fear that, after 2,000 years of exile, Jews have lost the very ability to plant roots. He spent his life obsessed with land. As a politician, he sought to ensure Jewish existence in the Middle East by literally bolting it to the ground; pouring tons of concrete into his housing projects in the occupied territories; and stubbornly defending every hill, plain, and valley. This, he thought, would teach Israelis, as well as their enemies, that the Jews are here to stay. He deeply mistrusted Arabs, yet, as the journalist Ari Shavit has noted, he also envied their devotion to the land. If only the Jews could acquire this mystic sense of roots, and the determination to cling to them at all cost, they just might secure their little Spartan haven in the Middle East.

Beyond this dark, even paranoid, view of the world, there was a tragic note behind Sharon's political conversion: At an old age, he learned that his lifelong efforts were mostly misguided. Only from the helm of state did he realize that Israel's existence was endangered rather than strengthened by the concrete he so relentlessly poured in the territories.

With Olmert, there's no such hint of the dark and tragic. He loves life, its pleasures and luxuries—well-tailored suits, Havana cigars, frequent traveling—and he trusts people more easily and delights in colorful company. During his campaign, he declared that he would make Israel "a country

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it would be fun to live in." It seemed to most analysts like a frivolous way to talk about politics. But this was no mere slip of the tongue. More than most political elites, Olmert is extremely comfortable in a yarmulke and evinces genuine comfort with religious tradition. Still, Olmert's weltanschauung isn't beholden to a mythical conception of Jewish existence. Compared with Sharon, there is something lighthearted, even yuppie, about him.

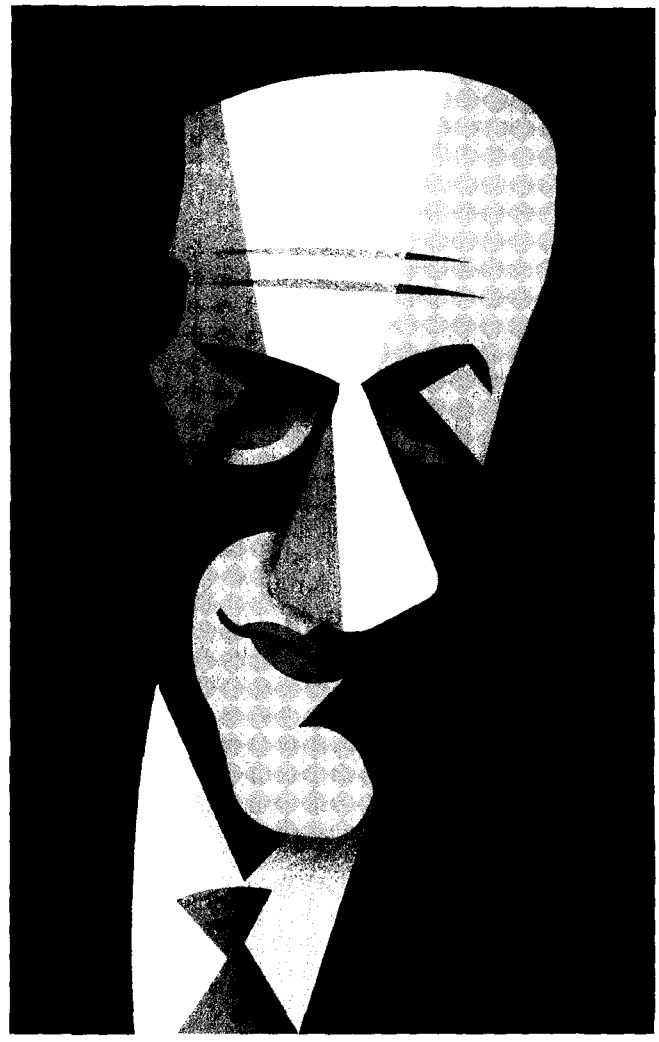
Unlike Sharon, who fought in the War of Independence, Olmert was three years old in 1948. During most of his lifetime, the state of Israel was a political fact, rather than a yearning or a miracle. Olmert's generation was the intentional product of Zionism: He sees the Jews as a normal people who wish, or should wish, to live normal lives. This isn't a trivial suggestion. Not in a place so haunted by fantasies.

Olmert is well-aware that he must help Israelis sober up: The right has to awake from the biblical fantasy of Greater Israel, as the left has to put aside hopes for easy peace in a "New Middle East." A few days before the Barnea interview, Olmert hinted as much, speaking at the desert burial site of Israel's founding father, David Ben Gurion: "Ben Gurion's greatness was not just his ability to lift the vision of the ages to great heights, but also to limit it to what the circumstances of the time permitted."

IT IS STRANGE to hear Olmert quote Ben Gurion, because he was born into a milieu that despised the man and his pragmatic socialism. Menachem Begin, who held the credo "in blood and fire Judea fell, in blood and fire Judea shall rise," used to refer to Olmert as "Ehud, my son." Olmert's actual parents had immigrated from China in 1933 to escape communist persecution. His father, Mordechai, a devoted follower of the revisionist Zionist Zeev Jabotinsky, joined Begin's Irgun militia and right-wing Herut movement. For the first three years of Ehud's life, the Olmert family lived in an old Turkish fortress near the Mediterranean shore, south of Haifa. Disguised as an agricultural settlement, the Irgun used the facility secretly to train its fighters.

After the establishment of the state, the Olmert family settled not far from the old fortress, in Binyamina, along with other members of Begin's Herut movement. They stuck together in a neighborhood they named Nahalat Jabotinsky, after their political forbearer. Despite this ideological kinship with Begin's movement, Ehud's parents were independent-minded. His mother, Bella, believed in a strict upbringing, especially when it came to young Ehud's homework and piano practice. His father served as a Herut member of the Knesset but refused to consistently toe the party line, and Begin ultimately ousted him for his heterodoxy. So the Olmerts were outsiders within a community of outsiders. And, when Ehud would later enter politics, he was already schooled in the politics of dissent.

Ehud aspired to an illustrious military career. But, while training with an elite infantry unit, he broke two limbs. He



DAVID COWLES

used his healing time to enroll at Hebrew University, majoring in philosophy, psychology, and law. It was there that he became an activist. In 1966, just 20, he made his real political debut in a speech to a Herut conference. To the audience's shock, he called on Begin, who was actually in the room, to resign for failing to carry national elections. This was more than just heresy. For Herut, Begin was larger than life—the uncontested leader. And the crowd reacted to Olmert with unmitigated fury. Recovering from the initial shock, it rose to storm the podium. He would have been physically assaulted had Begin himself not demanded that they let the young man make his point.

Olmert's earliest political mentor, the dashing lawyer Shmuel Tamir, bolted Herut just months before the 1967 war to establish a new centrist party. And Olmert joined him, as he would later follow Sharon into Kadima. But Tamir's party failed miserably, and the dissidents eventually made their peace with Begin, joining his newly formed Likud Party. In 1973, Olmert won a Knesset seat, becoming Israel's youngest legislator. There he followed Tamir's lead and became a hell-raising muckraker.

His first independent crusade was liberating Israel's

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professional soccer league from organized crime. He loved the game. But soccer hardly qualified as a life-and-death matter, and crime did not count among the most pressing of Israel's problems, so few took the matter seriously. According to political folklore, when Olmert petitioned the Knesset, he and his fellow crusaders were softly, even fondly, rebuked. The old Orthodox minister of interior, Yosef Burg, looked down from the podium at Olmert with benevolent paternalism. Addressing the rebels by their first names, he quipped, "What organized crime? In this country, nothing is organized. What makes you think crime, of all things, would be?"

But muckraking turned out to be an effective stepping stone—and a more weighty issue than even Olmert had guessed. Working closely with journalists, Olmert exposed the criminal connections of a military hero, General Rehavam Zeevy, and issues of corruption relating to Avraham Offer, the Labor minister of housing. Among the public, he came to be known as "the investigating MK [Member of Knesset]."

National attention brought opportunities, and these had ironic consequences. Olmert discovered that his parliamentary career attracted legal clients. Israeli law, since changed, permitted MKs to hold private jobs, and Olmert increasingly straddled the fuzzy line demarcating big money and government. His image was gradually turned on its head: from righteous tribune of the plebes to patrician elite.

Accusations of shoddy dealings have long dogged his public life. He was allegedly implicated in a scandal involving forged receipts for donations to the 1988 Likud campaign, of which he was co-treasurer. This affair culminated in the conviction of three other Likudniks. Another allegation detailed a loan of $50,000 Olmert received in 1981 from the CEO of the Bank of North America, without interest or scheduled payback. But, despite trials and investigations, none of these charges ever added up to a conviction. The fact that he eluded some charges for lack of evidence left his public image tainted. Shortly before the last election, *Haaretz* published a lengthy story titled "PRIME MINISTER FOR LACK OF EVIDENCE." It probably did not help his case that he abandoned his earlier working relationship with journalists. His style as an interviewee is extremely belligerent, and he has, on several occasions, sued reporters for libel—a strategy that has hardly paid off.

As many have remarked, his public image stands in sharp contrast to the flesh-and-blood man. In person, Olmert possesses Clintonian charm: A tall and imposing man, he creates a sense of ease around him. He is quick to hug, and he listens attentively. "One thing was already clear back then," says Uzi Atzmon, who ran the law firm where Olmert worked in the 1970s, "and it's still true: Ehud isn't prone to megalomania, and, unlike so many politicians, he never let success go to his head." The ease with which Olmert creates personal bonds has nothing to do with prestige or rank. As mayor of Jerusalem, he made many personal friendships with the rich and famous. But he befriends the least famous and the least rich with the same ease. When he left his post as minister of health, his office staff held a small farewell ceremony: thank you speeches, toasts, and light refreshments. Amid the festivities, the cleaning lady stepped forward and asked to say a few words. In a thick Russian accent, she described how the minister would arrive early for work. She was often the only other person in the office. Every morning, for two years, he'd make coffee for her, and every morning, between 5:45 and 6:00, they would converse about their families and lives.

The discrepancy between his appealing private self and his sullied public image goes back to his youth. When he first approached his future wife, Aliza Richter, she knew only his public side. They were both activists at Hebrew University, he on the right and she on the left. When he asked her out, she declined. He came across in speeches, she later said, as abrasive and arrogant. But he wouldn't give up. He persuaded the manager of the restaurant where she waited tables to hand over her phone number. Finally, she consented to a date. In a matter of days, they decided to marry.

ALIZA RICHTER WAS born to Holocaust survivors in a German displaced-persons' camp. Like her parents, she maintained a lifelong commitment to left-wing causes. A social worker by training, she has made "children at risk" her professional concern. She is also an accomplished writer and artist. Recently, she unveiled a series of broken eggshells, painstakingly reconstructed. Far less dashing and talkative than her spouse, her quiet demeanor commands respect. It must not have been easy to oppose the occupation while her husband was so busy trying to make it permanent, especially when Olmert veered to the extreme right. In late 1978, he supported a bill to annex swaths of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza—a proposal too radical even for Begin's government to touch. For the better part of his career, he was an adamant supporter of the settlers. Aliza, however, never wavered. (And she clearly left an imprint on their youngest son, Ariel, a student at the Sorbonne, who refused to serve in Israel's army.) Olmert recently joked that, after 35 years of argument, she finally wore him down. In any case, after voting against her husband for years, she finally voted for him in March.

In the first decade and a half of their marriage, Aliza and Ehud Olmert had four kids, adopted a fifth, moved between eleven rented apartments, and struggled to make ends meet. By the mid-'80s however, Olmert's law business yielded enough to buy a large house in a pricey Jerusalem neighborhood, and Olmert's political career was on the rise. He belonged—along with Roni Milo and Dan Meridor—to the circle of up-and-coming politicians dubbed "the Likud princes." And, for a time, he seemed like a likely candidate to succeed Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

But then Benjamin Netanyahu, Olmert's nemesis ever since, burst onto the scene and offered what seemed like an appealing alternative to the old party machine. He took

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Likud by storm and forced Olmert to chart a different course. Olmert became mayor of Jerusalem and waited on the sidelines to take another shot at Likud's top slot. This shot came in 1999, when he ran against Sharon in the Likud primaries and failed by a large margin. Defeated, he resigned himself to becoming a Sharon man and remaining mayor.

During his decade in that office, Olmert concentrated on improving Jerusalem's infrastructure—opening the city's skyline for skyscrapers and beginning to build a citywide light train system. While he attempted to solidify municipal jurisdiction over areas east of Jerusalem in the West Bank, Olmert did in his two terms as mayor much more for Jerusalem's Arab neighborhoods than his dovish predecessor, Teddy Kollek, did in six. He secured large government funds to improve services in the eastern parts of the city. Given the demographic realities of Jerusalem, his achievements in office were considerable. Escalating tensions between the city's ultra-Orthodox population, its secular enclaves, and its large Palestinian population made the city almost ungovernable. In spite of all this, Olmert managed to modernize the city's infrastructure.

Presiding over unruly Jerusalem may have sped Olmert's increasing disillusionment with the idea of Greater Israel. The city offers a microcosm of religious and political fundamentalism, and, from this vantage point, Likud's opposition to partition may have looked hopeless. But, if Olmert indeed had such an epiphany, his alliance with Sharon concealed it. Few suspected in the first few years of the new millennium that a Sharon man, let alone Sharon himself, would change his mind so fundamentally.

In the meantime, with Sharon's firm grasp of Likud—and with Netanyahu lurking—Olmert's chances for ever reaching the top looked bleak. And, when he finally announced his break with the ideology of Greater Israel—in that famous *Yedioth* interview—his chances seemed even bleaker: Only 7 percent of Likud members named him as their preferred candidate for prime minister.

When Sharon formed his second coalition government in 2003, he promised Olmert the treasury ministry—one of the most important portfolios he could offer. But that promise proved maddeningly fleeting. In an attempt to both pacify and outmaneuver Netanyahu and his supporters, Sharon gave the treasury to Olmert's nemesis. He offered Olmert the considerably less illustrious ministry of commerce and industry and other small perks. At first, Olmert refused and seriously considered fleeing to the private sector. To sweeten the deal and keep Olmert in the fold, however, Sharon offered him the title of senior deputy prime minister, a job that automatically placed him in the top chair if Sharon ever died or grew incapacitated. It was this item that proved decisive.

The seven months between the August 2005 withdrawal from Gaza and the March 2006 elections was one of the most dramatic periods in Israeli history. During that short time, the political world turned over no less than four times. First, there was the pullout itself, which doomed the fate of the old hawkish worldview. Second, Sharon left Likud, breaking the old system dominated by two dueling parties. Then Sharon lapsed into a coma, and finally, after all that tumult, the Palestinians went and elected Hamas.

The first shock, disengagement, turned Sharon from a controversial figure into a widely revered leader. Many now counted him in the same breath with Ben Gurion, Begin, and Yitzhak Rabin. When the second shock—Sharon's break with Likud—came about, this elevated status didn't prevent political analysts from taking a dim view of his new party. It was a one-man enterprise, they claimed, containing people so different, and opinions so diverse, that it would disintegrate without the magnetic pull of Sharon's personal authority.

And, for a moment, after Sharon's collapse—the third shock—it seemed that the pundits' gloomy prophecies might come to fruition. With less than three months left before the elections, Sharon collapsed and Kadima rallied behind Olmert, who now served as acting prime minister, rather than tear itself apart in feuds. To the pundits' surprise, the polls indicated a stable lead for the Sharon-less Kadima, which meant that the center's strength actually lay in its ideology. The very idea seemed strange in an age of Israeli disillusionment. But, nevertheless, there it was in the polls, every weekend, plain as daylight.

With the birth of the center, Israel acquired a new political vernacular. Israelis used to speak of any withdrawal as "concessions," in return for which Israel must gain something. A peace accord was the goal; withdrawal was the price. Now withdrawal itself became the goal: It is what Israel needs to do to protect its core, a democratic Jewish state.

But then—this was the fourth shock—came the Hamas victory. And, once again, it seemed like the Sharon consensus would collapse. The old logic threatened to reassert itself: withdrawal from Gaza (i.e., "concessions") was rewarded by a new surge of hate. Give them a finger and they'll try to take the whole hand. And so forth. But, yet again, the Sharon-Olmert bloc proved stable: The new center took the rise of Hamas as proof of the new logic. The new logic, after all, was based on the assumption that the Palestinians would not go for a peace deal. Hamas's victory confirmed that they were too recalcitrant for that. Without a partner to cut a deal with, the onus now clearly shifted to Israel to take unilateral measures to establish permanent borders—and thus two states—or else risk a Lebanon-style permanent state of civil war with the Palestinians.

Although the polls predicted a larger victory for Kadima, the election results nevertheless were momentous: A party that was formed some three months before the elections became Israel's largest, by a wide margin. But perhaps we should be less surprised by the sudden rise of this consensus. Kadima's ideology—Olmert's vision of normality—is actually a return to the older, pre-1967 Zionism. It is no accident that Olmert evokes Ben Gurion so often. For, in Ben Gurion's view, as in Theodor Herzl's before him, colonialism and

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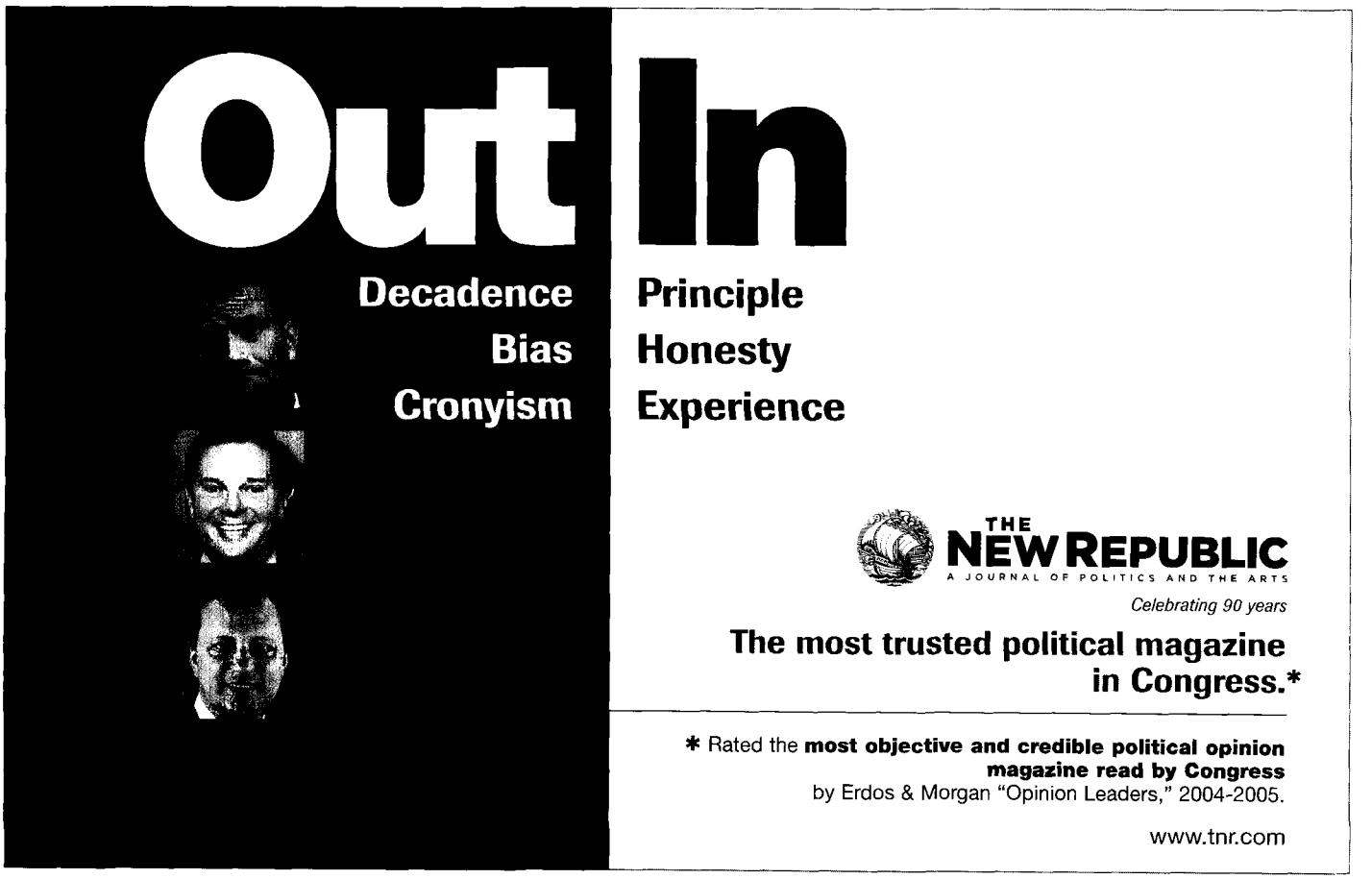
Zionism cannot be reconciled. Democracy and the universal right of self-determination were not incidental features of Zionism. To become subjects rather than objects of history, Zionists believe, the Jews need to become a self-governing nation. That is, they need to become a nation (as opposed to being only a faith), and that nation must govern itself. This could only come about in a sovereign democratic state. There was no way to implement the plan unless there was one place under the sun where the Jews are a majority.

While Ariel Sharon may have laid the necessary political groundwork from the triumph of this older vision, it fits Olmert like one of his bespoke suits. And it is appropriate that he must carry the burden of executing it.

But can Olmert actually complete this momentous task of remaking Israel? For starters, his project depends on that unpredictable factor, international support. If the international community recognizes Israel's new borders, then a de facto Palestinian state will have been established. If not, then his maneuvers will have amounted to a quick fix, subject to future vicissitudes. Then there's the fractious coalition over which he presides. Though further unilateral withdrawal can muster a majority bloc in Israel's 120-member Knesset, such decisive steps as redrawing borders and uprooting the settler population requires a moral force more powerful than a formal majority. Such a force exists, since many supporters of the moderate right (of Netanyahu's Likud Party and of Avigdor Liberman's Yisrael Beytenu) support some form of unilateral withdrawal. But Netanyahu might return to his historic role of Olmert's nemesis and attempt to exploit the prime minister's bold moves for political gain. He would take advantage of Olmert's precarious majorities and attempt to overthrow his coalition. To pull off this move, Netanyahu and Liberman would ally with the small minority that still wants to resurrect the dream of Greater Israel—and the ultra-Orthodox might join them. It's an extremely plausible strategy that Olmert will need to defuse.

In other words, a great deal will depend on whether Olmert can inspire the current Knesset to rise above party politics and to consider the long-term national interests over the short-term partisan ones. Which is to say, a great deal depends on Olmert himself. There is, indeed, much in his favor. His ideological vision is clear and persuasive—far more so than Sharon's. He is tougher than most Israelis seem to think, and his intellectual power is beyond doubt. He is also well-versed in machine politics. But to turn his vision into reality will require something more than this—something difficult to define, except to say it is always more than the sum of its parts: leadership. So Israel now holds its breath and waits to see if it only elected a mere prime minister or a truly historic figure. ■



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BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Back in the Saddle

IN HIS VALUABLE BOOK *WESTERNS,* Philip French notes the latter-day decline in Western films, then adds: "But the spirit that informs the genre, along with its legendary characters, myths, historical associations, values and contradictions, is far from dead, though often turning up in unexpected forms and in previously unvisited places." That very undead spirit reappears in two new films, one in an unexpected form, the other in a place that has not been quite unvisited but is hardly worn.

DOWN IN THE VALLEY
(ThinkFilm)

THE PROPOSITION
(First Look)

DOWN IN THE VALLEY uses its unexpected form for sobering intent. It depicts the effect that a film genre can have on a person's mind, and thus also reveals the mental hunger that had been nourished by this model. A previous instance in another genre: Travis Bickle in *Taxi Driver* is a forlorn man who needs to behave like a movie tough guy in order to flesh out his puny life. Here the self-dramatization is Western. A young man named Harlan Carruthers arrives in Los Angeles from South Dakota in full cowboy persona, with Gary Cooper courtesy and chivalry, lasso, and two Colts. He has no ambition toward films (any more than Travis had). Apparently he just wants to play his film role in the area that spawned so many Westerns. Later he accidentally encounters the filming of a Western, but even though he is in Hollywood, he never wants to fulfill his fantasy on screen—he just wants to live it.

Harlan gallantly throws over his bread-and-butter job at a filling station to go to the beach with a pretty adolescent girl named Tobe, and he wears his Stetson all the while. His gentle strongman behavior attracts the girl, and a torrid affair ensues. Her policeman father is displeased, though Harlan fascinates Tobe's kid brother. The ins and outs of the ructions that follow are not surprising. They abut two matters: on the one hand, there is Harlan's fake Westernizing, including some horseback sequences, all of which entrances Tobe; on the other hand, there are the father's objections, increasingly futile. Tobe's attraction to the fantasist is a mirror image of Harlan's own need for fantasy.

The story winds along (a foray into a synagogue is pointless). Inevitably shootouts arrive: fantasy leads to fatalities. Looked at with a smidgen of rationality, this film doesn't make any sense. (And there are unexplained details. Where did Harlan's saddle come from?) But since it's about a young man whose life doesn't make any sense, rationality is probably not the right criterion.

Then what keeps us watching? Chiefly it is Edward Norton's performance as Harlan. It is hard to doubt his belief in everything he says, no matter how silly or dangerous it sounds. At the finish he is only a case who has met a case's dénouement, but en route he is a live, dream-intoxicated being. As Tobe's father, David Morse is his usual solid self. Evan Rachel Wood, as Tobe, obeys the director as best she can.

He is David Jacobson, who also wrote the script. The screenplay and the directing are not free of movie reminders—some of Harlan's soliloquies, performed solo in his room, echo Travis's in *Taxi Driver*—but Jacobson suggests again that the absence of Westerns on screen has not wiped them out. They survive in the world's mind.

Australia is not a previously unvisited place for a Western, yet it is still so novel that an Australian Western has an odd effect. It reminds us of similarities between that country and ours: huge space in the west, for instance, and a native population that was treated roughly by invading whites. This Australian film, **THE PROPOSITION**, is set in the late nineteenth century, so a captain of lawmen in an outpost can still have an ambition we have heard often from Western lawmen—to civilize the place. Also, even though much of his action is against natives, he has an Aborigine scout at his beck, just as U.S. regiments in the West had Indian scouts.

The screenwriter was Nick Cave, better known as a musician. Here he remembers some of his country's history and lets it remind him of Sam Peckinpah, whose unique contributions to the Western are adopted by Cave with limited success. Peckinpah's masterwork, *The Wild Bunch*, uses armed robbers as its center, not to glorify criminality but to highlight two facets: the West, in all its aspects, gave the romance of the robber—the mounted robber—a panoply of glamour; and the behavior of these outlaws was in several ways often like the legal behavior of soldiers and civilians.

Peckinpah, no matter how violent his work became, always kept in mind the reasons for it. Cave, a good deal of the time, simply wallows in the fact that a Western licenses violence. The opening scene plunges us into a whirlpool of killing led by the captain and his men against outlaws, and exploited for every possible ferocity by the director, John Hillcoat, and the cinematographer, Benoît Delhomme. When the fight is finished, with the outlaws defeated, the captain offers the captive outlaw Charlie Burns a proposition. Charlie's brother Arthur has escaped. If Charlie will kill Arthur by Christmas, the captain will spare their other brother, Mikey, who is a prisoner and will otherwise be hanged.

Hillcoat and Delhomme make the most of the visual paradox that Westerns allow: almost all the riding and fighting and even ruminations take place against settings of extraordinary beauty. The setting sun is one of their favorite assets. A scene near the end and the final scene itself consist of two of the brothers seated outdoors, their backs toward us, contemplating action as they watch the sun set.

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But despite the pictorial riches, despite the firm performances by Ray Winstone as the captain and Guy Pearce as Charlie Burns, despite the miraculous John Hurt in an eccentric role that was put in just for spice, *The Proposition* is hollow. It never comes to any kind of point or purpose. To show the "civilizing" of the outback? To show the cruel treatment of the Aborigines? No, these are not the film's motives, just its excuses for existence.

Yet the arrival of *Down in the Valley* and *The Proposition* simultaneously—by accident, I'd guess—underscores French's thesis. Westerns persist. They have been powerful for a long time in American cultural history. Before film existed, the theater was rife with Westerns—out of which the first Western films grew (*The Great Train Robbery*, for instance). And the craving for them soon spread globally. In 1910 Puccini converted a corny Western melodrama into *La Fanciulla del West*. Hip though we all are, wisely aware of hokum, the Western is still sunk somewhere in our heads. We had better not discard our invisible Stetsons and Colts just yet. ■

DAVID HAJDU ON MUSIC
The Producers

ON THE SEATING CHART of the creative fraternity, record producers occupy one of the rows behind film directors and in front of book editors. In recording, it is the performers who are the "artists," as the music press and the people who run the Grammys like to remind us. Producers, as a rule, are hired by record companies to produce in a fundamentally commercial sense: to supply product. The task involves extraction (from the artists), organization and supervision (of those artists and their work), and collaboration (with the artists), in varying measures; the producer's job is essentially sustentative. Still, with every movement in popular music—and, on occasion, in other kinds of music—we tend to find at least one celebrated producer, whose output is distinctive and individualistic enough to foster claims of nothing less than authorship.

Since the first years of rock and roll, when Sam Phillips of Sun Records dissuaded Elvis Presley from recording the gospel standards and romantic ballads that the young singer loved in favor of the country blues that Phillips preferred to hear him do, the notion of the ministerial, even wizardly producer has become a fixture of pop-music iconography. After Phillips came Phil Spector in Brill Building pop, Berry Gordy at Motown, George Martin with the Beatles, Billy Sherrill in Nashville, Gamble and Huff in Philly soul, Robert Stigwood in disco, Brian Eno in new wave, and countless others revered in the innumerable substrata of recorded music. More than a few have hopped several rows ahead of the performers whom they have produced, in critical esteem if not in fame. Indeed, we are now in a day when one of the most acclaimed figures in popular music, the producer Rick Rubin, does not perform, and one of the most successful performers in pop, the rapper Kanye West, made his reputation as a producer of other acts.

RUBIN, WHO RECENTLY WON an award from *Esquire* for being the "Best Visionary" of 2006, has become the preeminent producer of the day by employing an aesthetic that pre-dates recording. His primary concerns as a producer are composition and performance, and his main objective is to capture the sound of people in the act of music-making. He thinks of recording as Edison did, as the documentation of an art made by others rather than as a creative act in itself. To Rubin, the performance, not the record, is the art form. In this, he is more a reactionary than a visionary.

Now forty-three years old, Rubin has made more than seventy albums in the past twenty-four years, and from the first, his work has been an act of self-abnegation. He began producing singles for a record company that he formed with a friend, Russell Simmons, while he was still an undergraduate at New York University. Rubin ran the label, Def Jam Records, out of room 712 in Weinstein Hall—paltry quarters, even by New York City dorm standards. (I know, because I had a girlfriend on the same floor of Weinstein a few years earlier, when I was living around the corner in Rubin Hall.) And Def Jam's recordings were more spartan still—prototypal hip-hop, undoctored, unadorned.

Rubin, a Jewish kid from Long Island welcomed into the society of African American street music because of his ardor for and knowledge of the genre, made restrained, unprepossessing records in service to the musical culture he found. "I wondered what it would be like if a record felt and sounded like being at a club instead of trying to sound like a record," he has explained. The results, which included LL Cool J's breakthrough, "Radio," presented hip-hop as it was then being created, by a rapper working with no more than a turntable and a drum machine. The label on "Radio" said "Reduced by Rick Rubin." But what Rubin did was not an act of reduction; it was a refusal to inflate—or to intercede in any way. It was clearly a mark of respect, even selfless passion, and also the surest way to share in the glory of a daring new music without the risks inherent in attempting to make an original contribution.

Before long, *The Village Voice* enthroned Rubin as "the king of rap." As such, he was an heir to Alan Lomax and John Hammond, white advocates of black music who had recorded blues and jazz pretty much as they had found it, and became renowned for their good taste, prescience, and egalitarianism. As rap evolved into hip-hop, taking up sampling, growing denser and more complex sonically, its *mise en scène* shifted from the street to the studio, and Rubin lost interest. "My goal is to just get out of the way and let the people I'm working with be their best," he later said. When hip-hop began requiring a great deal more of its producers than affectionate impassivity, Rubin got out of its way, left Def Jam and New York, and started a new record company called Def American (later renamed American Recordings) in Los Angeles. Through the 1990s, he concentrated on arena rock, recording the music that he loved first as a boy in Long Island, making blunt, gutsy records for the likes of Slayer, Danzig, and AC/DC, as well as albums for somewhat more venturesome bands such as

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Rage Against the Machine and the Red Hot Chili Peppers (a West Coast group that he discovered and nurtured at his label). Rubin focused primarily, but not exclusively, on touring bands who were devoted to live performance, and who worked in modes so overwrought and extravagant that what they needed most was to be reduced by Rick Rubin.

Like Phil Spector, "Shadow" Morton (Spector's Brill Building colleague and the producer of the top-forty soundscapes "Leader of the Pack" and "Society's Child"), and many rock producers to follow, Rubin maintains a fastidiously crafted aura of eccentric genius. He has a frazzled, nesty beard that hangs down to his ample belly, and he nearly always wears dark sunglasses, old jeans, and baggy t-shirts—"clothes that would make a wino proud," as Johnny Cash wrote in his memoirs. Rubin's face is nearly impossible to read behind all that cover. A practicing Buddhist, he embodies the asceticism at the heart of his music and his adopted faith. He neither smokes nor drinks, and he says he has never used drugs. When Rubin takes on a recording project, he starts spending time with the musicians before the songwriting, taking walks along the beach, sharing natural food and drinking herbal tea, talking about "anything." By the time he and the musicians enter the studio, his work is largely done; he has inspired the artists by his presence, and the players are now ready to go forth and justify his faith in them. In the recording booth, he never touches a knob. Indeed, he professes to care nothing for the technicalities of recording. As John Hammond was known to do, Rubin often lowers his head and closes his eyes while his artists play; unlike Hammond, Rubin is understood to be in a state of meditative rapture, not sleep.

"I want to be touched by the music I'm making," Rubin has explained. And "luckily, other people have shared that response to my work over the years." Apparently his selflessness has not undermined his perception of the recordings he has undertaken as *his* work, the music that *he* has been making. The secret meaning of Rubin's professional altruism, clearly, is what in the film world is called auteurism.

Present of Mind

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SINCE THE MID-1990S, WHEN Rubin began recording Johnny Cash, he has been best known for his seemingly sorcerous ability to revive waning careers. He has become the re-animator of American music. With Cash, Rubin did not have to do much, fortunately for them both. Cash's appeal had always been uncommonly broad for a country artist, and his brooding outlaw persona had long helped him connect to the rock audience; on the television variety show that Cash hosted from 1969 to 1971, he sang his country hits and did comedy sketches, and also pulled off duets with Bob Dylan and Joni Mitchell. When Rubin took on Cash, he sat him down in the studio with his guitar and had him run through songs—dozens and dozens of them, with little rehearsal. To augment Cash's vast old repertory, Rubin suggested some recent material by young writers, such as "Hurt," by Trent Reznor of Nine Inch Nails.

The idea was scarcely radical; Cash had been doing tunes by rock-era songwriters (such as Dylan's "It Ain't Me, Babe," Robbie Robertson's "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down," Harry Chapin's "Cat's in the Cradle") for decades. Still, the new recordings helped to introduce Cash to another generation of listeners, and the tracks had a rare poignancy. Cash was aged and ill with Parkinson's disease, and he nearly whispered the songs in a fragile croak, salvaging thin material through patination. In a month or so, nearly three years after Cash's death, another CD of Rubin's recordings of Cash will be released as *American V*. From resuscitating the careers of fading artists, Rubin has advanced to reviving the dead.

Rubin's effort to rejuvenate the Dixie Chicks, by steering them away from the sound of contemporary country toward music indebted to traditional bluegrass, is now high on the record charts, and Rubin has been working on a new album to reposition Justin Timberlake. Both of these projects, like the CD that Rubin made for Neil Diamond last year, called *12 Songs*, are acts of revivification through purification; they are cleansings, deeds of atonement for past sins of musical excess, artifice, or commercialism. Of a piece with the popular ritual of opulent transgression, public apology, and purging, they are the musical equivalent of a good cry on *Oprah* or *Larry King Live*.

RUBIN'S WORK IS A FETISHIZATION of authenticity, which he conflates with simplicity and ruralism. For *12 Songs*, he persuaded Diamond to accompany himself on guitar (for the first time on record since the 1960s), and he augmented Diamond's singing and playing with just a few acoustic instruments, strummed and plucked quietly in the background. The record includes snippets of studio chatter and ambient noises. It is a sedate, homey album—and nothing like Diamond's usual work, a fact that raises crucial questions about Rubin's conception of authenticity. On the first night of Diamond's series of concerts at Madison Square Garden last summer, I sat a few seats behind and to the right of Rubin. Diamond appeared on stage, in a flash of laser light, to the pounding electronic beats and synthesizer strains of "America." He was standing on the top of a tower in the center of the stage, bedecked in black and silver glitter, with his right fist thrust high in the air. I looked over at Rubin, who was shaking his head in disapproval. About an hour into the show, Diamond did a brief acoustic set ("And the Grass Won't Pay No Mind" and "Look Out, Here Comes Tomorrow," the latter written for the Monkees), and I noticed Rubin leaning forward in his seat, suddenly enthralled. There was no doubt which Neil Diamond appealed to his record producer. But which is the truer one, the more authentic? That is a separate matter.

Having listened to "Shiloh," the early Diamond song about his imaginary friend, the only one in his life whom he could ever trust, I am inclined to suspect that Diamond's demons are such that he will never reveal to us the inner Neil. The Diamond of "America"—the glitzy, mannered, and grandiose self-parody, the Jewish Elvis—is the Neil he has devoted a lifetime to devising and presenting to the public. If the artist's own intention has primacy in authenticity, Rick Rubin has done his client a disservice. The synthesizers of "America" are as authentic in their intentional artifice as the acoustic guitars of *12 Songs* are artificial in their enforced authenticity.

With few exceptions—among them *Oral Fixation 2*, the delightful, hard-grinding dance album that Rubin produced for

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Shakira last year—most of Rubin's recent productions have the casual raggedness of Abercrombie's "Ezra Fitch Premium Destroyed Boot Jeans," which are factory-made to appear worn, dirty, and ripped, and are sold at $168 per pair. For all their apparent earthiness, Rubin's records are calibrated to precise specifications, and every loose thread, every hole, is there by design.

KANYE WEST IS THE ANTI-Rubin. He revels in excess, and appears to care less about authenticity and spontaneity than Rubin does about equalizing filters. A proud dropout from Chicago State University, where his mother was chair of the English department, West began producing (in collaboration with others) in 1997. He had his first hit as a solo producer, "Chyna Doll" for Foxy Brown, the following year. West relishes sampling—indeed, he has played a key role in the return of sampling to prominence in hip-hop—and he is a relentless, insatiable tinkerer. For "Bring Me Down," a song he produced for the singer Brandy, West utilized 107 tracks of samples, instruments, effects, and vocals. Forty of those tracks were takes of Brandy's voice, all of them used in the finished recording. "The way he works, he just isn't content until he's tried recording and mixing a song every conceivable way," an engineer told a music magazine. "I was getting calls [from the record company] saying, 'We have to stop him. We have to cut him off.'" West treats production as composition, and, like Charlie Mingus and Gil Evans in jazz, his artistic method is trial and error.

As a producer, West has created a small body of hip-hop records that are orchestral in their density and textural complexity: "You Don't Know My Name" for Alicia Keys, "Slow Jamz" for Twista, and "Izzo (H.O.V.A.)" and "Takeover" for Jay-Z, the rapper and impresario who currently heads Rick Rubin's old label, Def Jam. The lyrics are banal—mostly about sex or macho posturing, like so much hip-hop—but they are decidedly secondary to the swirling, extravagant music and the beats, which are fresh and exciting.

As a rapper West is good, though not as good as he thinks. (No one is as good at anything as West believes he is at everything.) He has a soft, boyish voice, and his words are perfunctory, not remotely as poetic and inventive as the jagged layers of sound behind them. I caught him performing at a university concert in late April, and the highlight was a set of his renditions of tunes that he had produced for others, including "You Don't Know My Name" and Brandy's "Talk About Our Love." The music was luxurious and full of surprise—exhilarating tangents, strains of irresolution, delightful incongruities. It was also generated electronically: the only musicians on stage were a turntable artist and a seven-piece string section (three violins, two violas, and two cellos), whose playing was buried deep in the mix. Was it, for that reason, inauthentic? No: it was new and lavish, and neither trait makes it bad or wrong. ■

Robert M. Solow
Gee Whiz

REVOLUTIONARY WEALTH:
HOW IT WILL BE CREATED AND
HOW IT WILL CHANGE OUR LIVES
By Alvin Toffler and Heidi Toffler
(Alfred A. Knopf, 464 pp., $27.95)

1.

READING THIS BOOK IS A lot like watching the preview of a new action movie: one rapid-fire, fragmentary scene after another, loud, flashy, logically unconnected to the one that came before or the one that comes after. It is very exciting, but when it is over you have no clear idea what the movie is actually about.

Of course the book is longer than a preview, though it remains heavy on coming attractions. There are fifty chapters, averaging seven or eight pages each, and composed mainly of factoids—masses of factoids. Most of these snippets are blue-sky technological. But not all: one also learns that "a Tokyo-based company formed by designer Rei Kawakubo and her husband, Adrian Joffe, has opened a store in Berlin that, they claim, will exist for only one year, and will be closed down after that, whether profitable or not. The idea is supposed to reflect the ever-shorter shelf life of fashions, movies, music, and celebrity." It is never mentioned again.

In fact, *Revolutionary Wealth* stands as a tribute to the authors' clipping service and filing system. Chapter eight, for example, the source of that quotation about the disposable store, is nine pages long and has thirty-three endnotes. The endnotes contain thirty-nine references: twenty-eight to articles in newspapers (from the *Shanghai Daily* to the *Chattanooga Free Press*) and magazines, three to books, four to websites, two to radio or television broadcasts, and two to interviews. This is not atypical.

As a sample of the method, here is how chapter twenty-four treats health care in eight pages. This is a serious issue that has been the subject of serious thought, but not here. The chapter begins with a scare: "Health care is where the most spectacular new technologies are matched by the most obsolete, disorganized, counterproductive and often deadly medical institutions. If the term *deadly* seems excessive, think again." Thousands of people die each year from infections contracted in hospitals and from medical errors. Even when it comes to actual illness, the old communicable diseases are now much less important than ailments, such as cancer and heart disease, that are clearly affected by behavior. They are also diseases of old age. No health care system has been designed for this situation. Something "far more drastic than mere reform" is needed.

Then comes a recital of the substantial fractions of GDP spent on health care by major advanced economies. "The number for the United States exceeded 14 percent. How far can that number grow before the bankruptcy lawyers arrive?" The reference to bankruptcy is exactly wrong and unhelpful. An individual hospital can go bankrupt; but presumably a large and growing volume of health care

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expenditure makes that event less likely, not more. Much of the spending in question is government-financed, and there bankruptcy is not an issue.

The Tofflers then point out, quite correctly, that these figures understate the resources actually devoted to health care, because they do not capture the large volume of care delivered informally at home, by relatives and friends. This has always been the case, but the share of home health care may have increased lately, and it has certainly become more sophisticated. Much serious information is available to households via the Internet, and new technology has allowed much more to be done in the home, a prime example being the case of diabetes.

Next comes a brief catalog of far-out health care stuff that is available, or may some day be available, in your very own home for your very own use, from a "'finger goniometer' for measuring range of motion in metacarpophalangeal finger joints" to automatic urine analysis with every flush. (Every flush? Geez, Louise.) Naturally there is a take-back sentence, not the only one in the book: "As with any such forecasts, not all of these products will ever see the light of day, or prove cheap, practical and safe. But they represent only the first drops of a technology torrent to come. It will change the economics of both self-care and paid care." So we pass from empty concreteness to vague generality.

The message of the chapter appears to be that we should think about educating our children to be more knowledgeable and skillful at home health care, thus solving both the health care crisis and the educational crisis with one revolutionary stroke. I am not sure that this amounts to something "more drastic than mere reform."

THE TOFFLERS ARE BIG ON the non-market economy, the large volume of valuable productive activity that goes on in the home, or even outside the home, but is not bought and sold in any market and thus never makes it into the National Income and Product statistics. It covers a broad range, from the home health care just discussed, to cooking and cleaning, to do-it-yourself projects, to volunteer work in the community, to newer activities conducted via the Internet. They think it is very important, very large, and getting larger (though they would not dream of trying to measure it). And they seem to think that they are rescuing this concept from "an enormous, gaping black hole in standard economics, which partially explains why even top-league economists and scholars have so poor a record in forecasting."

Well, actually, standard economics has not ignored non-market work, and anyway that is not why forecasting is so poor. The importance of the non-market economy has been talked about for a long time. When national income accounting was being invented, some seventy years ago, there was active discussion about where to draw the line. Rents were imputed to owner-occupied homes, but not to the services of housewives, mainly for measurement reasons. Generations of bold teaching assistants have explained to their elementary classes why, if a prostitute marries her favorite client, the measured national product falls.

The Tofflers have come across Gary Becker's groundbreaking paper of 1965, "A Theory of the Allocation of Time." They seem to think that he was discovering non-market work. What he was actually doing was demonstrating how it could be brought into the analytical fold, alongside market activity, using the tools of "standard economics." They also think that the fact that Becker's Nobel Prize did not come until twenty-seven years later is evidence of the obtuseness of economists. But Becker's talent was recognized from the day he graduated from Princeton; there was never any chance that so bright a light would be hidden under a bushel. A little research would have turned up a relevant fact: taking 1992 and the five years before and after, there were eighteen Nobel Prize–winners in economics, of whom Becker was the fourth-youngest. This is utterly trivial, of course, but it is an indication of the carelessness of thought in this book, and the sheer ignorance on which the frequent economist-bashing is based.

It is a nice question whether the share of non-market work in the modern economy is rising or falling. As the Tofflers point out, innovations in information and communications technology have allowed a lot of valuable economic activity to be decentralized and to escape the market. This factor may be dwarfed, however, by the massive movement of women into the market economy. The diaper service and the disposable diaper have replaced home diaper-laundering; fast food, restaurant meals, and semi-cooked supermarket fare have replaced home-cooked meals; and various forms of paid child care have replaced mom staying home with the kids. The whole point of Becker's work, which launched a small industry within economics, was to suggest a way to think systematically about just those decisions and others. That sort of thing leaves the Tofflers cold.

II.

NOW YOU KNOW WHAT *Revolutionary Wealth* is like. But what is it about? The story starts with the commonplace that modern society is in the midst of a "revolutionary wave of change in wealth creation." This is what has sometimes been called the post-industrial society, or the knowledge-based economy, or the information-technology revolution. Its origin seems to be mainly technological, along with the human tendency to prefer the consumption of relatively fewer material goods and relatively more services as income rises. But there are also broad cultural and political implications. The pace of change is accelerating dramatically, to the point that our institutions are falling behind and failing to cope. How the Tofflers can speak so confidently of acceleration—an increase of velocity—when they never measure anything is an interesting question. I will come back to this pedantic point in a moment.

Throughout the book, there are weighty references to "deep fundamentals," presumably meant to be the glue that holds the factoids together. The deep fundamentals are time, space, and knowledge. The problem is that nothing very "deep" seems to be happening here. It is certainly true, for instance, that computer technology has made it possible for many economically and socially significant activities to be carried on at much higher speeds than used to be available. Communication can be virtually instantaneous. This means, in a world of services, that some products can be delivered at the same high speed. Other activities continue to take more time.

The Tofflers call this development "desynchronization," and they say that it puts pressure on managements to dovetail the different activities under their control. Social institutions designed to deal with different timing relationships may have to adapt to the newer conditions, and thus added frictions arise. To take another example, occupational skill requirements may change quickly, while

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educational curricula are notoriously sluggish. All this is moderately interesting, but it is merely pretentious to describe it as having something to do with the "deep fundamental of time."

Similarly, the shift from goods to services (as well as improvements in transportation technology) has vastly enlarged the geographic scope of economic activity. The relocation of call centers from the United States to India is a well-publicized example. Even within the realm of tangible goods, it has become possible to eat Peruvian-grown asparagus in New York in the winter, or to assemble parts from all over the world to create a finished product in China and ship it anywhere. Does it add anything to say that we are changing our relation to the "deep fundamental of space"? It seems more informative to observe that the spatial distribution of economic activity has become broader and flatter.

"KNOWLEDGE" IS A MUCH more complex affair, if only because it is less Euclidean than time and space, less open to quantification and comparison. There is much to be found out about the circumstances in which useful (or useless) knowledge is produced and consumed. Again I see no advantage in calling it a "deep fundamental" on the same footing as time and space; but by this point you will have grasped that the phrase is there mostly for show. In the end, the Tofflers can do no better than portentous but empty remarks such as this one: "And when we add these (changes in handling data) to the crises in economic thinking and science, it becomes evident that we are engaged in the fastest and most profound restructuring of knowledge in history, with implications reaching far beyond the economy to culture, religion, politics and social life. At the same time we are making the wealth of individuals and nations alike more dependent than ever on that growing global knowledge base."

Chapter twenty-five is a pretty good one, in five pages. It makes one point, with examples: information and communications technology has allowed and encouraged many service-sector companies to shift part of the workload from paid employees to consumers. The examples are standard. ATM access replaces teller-mediated bank transactions (but also allows you to get cash in the middle of the night). You can order airline tickets and books online. I need not remind you that "All of our 'customer advocates' are busy tending to other customers. Your call is important to us. Please stay on the line...." And this gets registered as an improvement in the industry's productivity!

I was going to say that work gets shifted from paid employees to unpaid consumers. The Tofflers realize that in principle, if this shift reduces the seller's costs, competition should lead to lower prices for customers, who are thus paid indirectly for their time and effort. They beg leave to doubt that competition has been sharp enough to enforce this indirect payment. They may well be right. The least they could have done is to scour the business literature to see if any mere academic had actually looked at the data. How much have banks spent on acquiring and maintaining ATMs? How does that compare with their saving of labor cost? (One of their endnotes, not discussed in the text, seems to hint that banks' return on investment may have fallen since ATMs were introduced.) What has happened to the implicit price of banking services (or telephoned catalog orders) since the introduction of ATMs (or catalog call centers)? Unfortunately, that is not the way the Tofflers work. They are content with a solemn and empty reference to the "deep fundamental" of time, and an ominous warning that more of this may be yet to come, with unspecified but no doubt sensational consequences.

A serious book could be written about the conjunction of fast technological (or other) change and the much slower reaction of regulatory arrangements and other social institutions. Whether it would be a story of fairly successful adaptation or of dangerous malfunction would remain to be seen. Since there seem to be no obvious general principles, case studies might be the way to go. How did central banks adapt to the internationalization of capital markets and their greater volatility, indeed in part by the advance of communications technology? How did the health care system adapt to the AIDS epidemic? Or, to take a current example, how did the institutions that are supposed to guarantee or regulate individual privacy deal with the enormous increase in the public and private capacity to eavesdrop?

Clearly there are many examples of this kind, and some have worked out better than others. The Tofflers' method is not to ask that question at all, but rather to claim very excitedly that everything is now happening faster and more drastically and that everything is up for grabs. And this brings me back to the question of measurement. Is the pace of change accelerating? If it is, by how much? Is it really unprecedented? This kind of sensationalism has its risks. I am reminded that in the late 1950s and early 1960s there was much alarmist talk about an "Automation Revolution." (The phrase "The Triple Revolution" was used, but I cannot remember what the other two aspects were. That literature was also rich in factoids-to-be.) The imminent danger was that accelerating productivity would cause human labor to become essentially obsolete. There would be no more jobs, and our society provided no substitute source of income.

Neither the protagonists of this idea nor the skeptics had any inkling that the late 1960s and early 1970s would bring just the opposite, a dramatic *deceleration* of productivity that would last for a quarter-century. The unexpectedness of that slowdown was probably an important cause of the inflation of the 1970s. And this history suggests a closer look at the growth of productivity during the past fifty-plus years. Productivity is only part of the story, but it is an important part and it has been carefully studied. The Tofflers' dizzy factoids go well beyond productivity to include all sorts of more or less mind-boggling lifestyle changes, some of them unquantifiable, some of them quantifiable but unquantified. Still, if we are talking about a revolution in wealth, all this turmoil must leave tracks in the evolution of productivity.

Economists have two standard concepts for measuring productivity. One is simply labor productivity: how much output—goods and services—the system can turn out for each hour worked. This is the ultimate source of improvements in the average standard of living. An analytically more sophisticated concept starts with the growth of labor productivity and then strips off the part of it that can be traced to identifiable and measurable sources: the two most important of these are sheer physical-capital accumulation (an hour's work with a shovel moves less earth than an hour's work with a backhoe) and the improvement of skills through education and training, sometimes called human-capital accumulation (a skilled data-entry clerk will produce more in an hour than a raw trainee). These two sources are obviously related: skill is needed to manage and to operate up-to-date capital equipment. The re-

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maining growth of productivity, known as total factor productivity, can be attributed loosely to technological change, including organizational improvement.

So what does the record show? Between 1950 and 1973, labor productivity (in private non-farm business) grew at 2.94 percent per year. Thus in 1973 an average hour of work produced 95 percent more output than in 1950. Between 1973 and 1995, the growth rate of labor productivity fell by half, to 1.47 percent per year, so that labor productivity was only 38 percent higher at the end of the period than at the beginning. Between 1995 and 2004, the growth rate returned to 3 percent per year, almost exactly where it had been in the 1950s and 1960s.

Some of that growth in labor productivity came from "conventional" sources, so total factor productivity grew more slowly: 1.95 percent per year in 1950–1973, 0.56 percent per year in 1973–1995, and back to 1.57 percent per year in 1995–2004. The slowdown of which I spoke earlier is clearly visible. Notice that the conventionally caused growth of labor productivity was about 1 percent per year before and during the slowdown; the deceleration was entirely centered in total factor productivity. The period since 1995 looks much better, though the advance of total factor productivity appears to be a bit *slower* than in the first postwar quarter-century, 1950–1973. This is a complex measurement problem, so no one should take the last decimal place too seriously.

It is generally agreed that the revival of productivity growth since 1995 mainly reflects the delayed effects of improved information technology and communications technology. Perhaps unexpectedly, much of it has come from dramatic improvement in the production of computers and related equipment, rather less from their use. It is hard to find the Tofflers' Gee Whiz revolution in these pedestrian data. At least so far as production matters, we are really not outside the range of past experience. But not to worry: the world is full of Gee Whizzes. The trouble is that merely counting them is not a useful guide to the seriousness and the location of social tension and change and opportunity. The Tofflers do not seem to understand this. That is why one can say of this book what Karl Kraus said of psychoanalysis: it is the disease of which it purports to be the cure. ■

Stephen Kotkin

Gasputin

All that stands between democracy and Russia is Russia.

I.

HAS RUSSIA BLOWN IT? The Kremlin's Edward Scissorhands–like deftness in seizing headlines by seizing billionaires and passing their private properties to KGB stooges, eliminating elections for regional executives, dictating national television content, intimidating NGOs, and cutting off the gas to spite its face is dreadfully impressive. By contrast, some former Soviet dominions have grabbed headlines by ostensible strides toward democracy—Georgia's 2003 "Rose Revolution," Ukraine's 2004 "Orange Revolution," Kyrgyzstan's 2005 "Tulip Revolution." Of course, even before mass rallies helped insiders displace the Shevardnadze "family" regime in Georgia, and Leonid Kuchma's family regime in Ukraine, and Askar Akaev's family regime in Kyrgyzstan, Vladimir Putin—without street mobilization but with considerable popular acclaim—gradually dismantled the family regime of Boris Yeltsin in Russia. No, the question is not whether Russia is headed toward democracy any more than Georgia, Ukraine, or Kyrgyzstan is headed that way. Sure, unlike Russia, Ukraine has a real parliament that (if it lasts) has the power to discipline the executive branch. But all three countries lack an independent judiciary and a genuine civil service—that is, an honest and effective state, without which democracy does not work.

The real issue, rather, is a muffed opportunity (again). Most of the euphoria in Russia in the 1990s—when macroeconomic stabilization, a six-month project, took seven years—emanated from a gross overestimation of actual structural reforms. Despite the leftist hysteria over the neo-liberal bogeyman, economic liberalization in Russia barely took place, and today it remains woefully partial for a normal market economy. But a few analysts, looking beyond the misunderstood 1990s, speculated that with a highly urbanized society, universal literacy, and a formidable education system and R&D community, as well as a policy course of substantial privatization, post-

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VIRTUAL POLITICS: FAKING DEMOCRACY IN THE POST-SOVIET WORLD
By Andrew Wilson
(Yale University Press, 332 pp., $40)

KREMLIN RISING: VLADIMIR PUTIN'S RUSSIA AND THE END OF REVOLUTION
By Peter Baker and Susan Glasser
(Scribner, 453 pp., $27.50)

PUTIN'S RUSSIA: LIFE IN A FAILING DEMOCRACY
By Anna Politkovskaya
(Metropolitan Books, 274 pp., $25)

INSIDE PUTIN'S RUSSIA: CAN THERE BE REFORM WITHOUT DEMOCRACY?
By Andrew Jack
(Oxford University Press, 362 pp., $30)

CRAFTING DEMOCRACY: HOW NOVGOROD HAS COPED WITH RAPID SOCIAL CHANGE
By Nicolai N. Petro
(Cornell University Press, 255 pp., $39.95)

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communist Russia was poised for an economic breakout. In 1993, Daniel Yergin and Thane Gustafson published *Russia 2010—And What It Means for the World*, presenting five plausible scenarios, all of which entailed some version of a stable market economy, and one of which was called "The Miracle." In 1996, Richard Layard and John Parker enthused without equivocation about "the coming Russian boom." These were longer-term views. Two years later, however, Boris Yeltsin's flimflam financial infrastructure defaulted. "Reform" was pronounced dead; the country, finished.

BUT AROUND 2000, THE EUPHORIA returned. Russia boomed, and analysts attributed much of the upswing to President Putin, a supposed "modernizer." Putin turned out to be not an impossible redeemer but himself—a KGB operative, with a lifelong collection of dubious colleagues, impressed by but suspicious of the West. Political commentators, their hopes curdled, soured on Russia once more. And this time intelligent people are even warning that Putin's Russia represents a threat to more than itself. By contrast, the tribe of investment analysts remain crazily bullish. Money types will remind you that Russia's economic growth is robust, and for a seventh straight year. The Russian stock index, despite blatant insider trading, rose 80 percent last year (and another 17 percent during my visit last winter), but it still trades at just thirteen times earnings, much cheaper than India's or China's. Russia also enjoys hefty budget and trade surpluses, $180 billion in foreign reserves, diminishing state debt (from 80 percent of GDP in 2000 to 30 percent today), rising labor productivity and personal incomes, and windfall energy revenues. Profits (after embezzlement) at Russia's energy majors jumped sevenfold in 2005 compared with the already flush 2004. But rather than deeper liberalization to sustain long-term growth, the windfall has incited clumsy state re-absorption of "strategic" assets (oil, gas, perhaps metals), which are then manipulated in self-defeating fashion.

Russia under Putin has gone from a state that was captive of dubious business interests to big business that is captive of a dubious state. Solve a problem, create a problem. Today's ham-fisted dirigisme of individual firms, and of the economy as a whole, may be endangering the country's post-1998 economic roll. In this regard, the PowerPoint slides of Andrei Illarionov—Putin's recently resigned bad-boy adviser—pack a wallop. They feature a Venezuela analogy. Before 1957, when Venezuela's oil was extracted by private companies (all foreign), Illarionov claims its growth rate was the highest in the world. Beginning in 1958, however, the Venezuelan government decided upon nationalization of the oil "patrimony" as well as of machine-building, transport, parts of the financial industry, and other "strategic" sectors. Today, he estimates, Venezuela's per capita GDP is one-third less than the level of 1957 in terms of real purchasing power. Its nationalist-statist example, symbolized by the State Oil Company of Venezuela, became OPEC's road map to economic involution. Illarionov calculates that the GDP of OPEC member countries is 27 percent lower today than it was in 1973, while flagrant corruption appears greater. Whatever the reliable figures, Illarionov insists that the Kremlin, having previously hamstrung Russia with a command economy, is now hamstringing it with the OPEC-Venezuelan model.

Oil is a curse, you say? Venezuelans call crude "the shit of the devil." But Kazakhstan would beg to differ. That's right, Kazakhstan. According to Illarionov, from 1998 to 2005, while Russia's economy grew 6.4 percent per year, Kazakhstan's grew 10.4 percent per year—China-like numbers (thanks to policies pursued partly out of fear of China). In Washington and Houston, autocratic Kazakhstan has become the new favorite, a hydrocarbon motherlode that is "stable." Kazakhstan's "family" regime looks enduring for the time being—after altering the country's constitution, President Nursultan Nazarbayev claimed 91 percent of the vote in his December 2005 "re-election" to a third term—while the country's already extensive proven oil reserves recently doubled, thanks to investment in new exploration. But Kazakhstan's machine-building industry, which in Soviet times severely trailed Russia's, has been advancing at an even greater clip than the steppe nation's energy sector. The explanation, Illarionov insists, is that Kazakhstan undertook what Russia continues endlessly to promise—reform of its banking sector (now deemed the

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strongest in the CIS), housing, health care, pensions, utilities. How Kazakhstan might weather a dip in oil prices remains to be seen. But even without an oil-price falloff, the pessimists on Russia have swelled. Are they right?

II.

ANDREW WILSON'S *VIRTUAL Politics: Faking Democracy in the Post-Soviet World* is the best of the recent books on the new Russia, but it misses an opportunity almost as big as the one Russia appears to be blowing. This work, by a smart London-based specialist on Ukraine, draws one of the few accurate portraits of how electoral politics operate across Eurasia. Although the book is choppy—the same campaigns recur in different chapters—its content is scintillating. It notes that Russian journalistic exposés turn out to be *zakazúkha*, "ordered up" column inches or airtime paid for, like advertising, by groups smearing business and political rivals with *kompromat* (compromising material, often completely fabricated). The most sophisticated is the "poison sandwich," a positive "news" piece that is suddenly tainted with a lethal calumny. And that's just some of the fun.

To siphon votes from targeted politicians, "clones" are deployed who mouth the same platforms. "Doubles" with names nearly identical to those of targeted candidates further confuse voters. "Flies" are swarmed against a powerful opponent to take many tiny bites out of his or her voting base. "Cuckoo birds" are nested into opponents' ranks to sow dissension. If all else fails, indictments are delivered up by "prosecutors." (Charges can be forgotten once the damaged candidate has been consigned to oblivion—why pay the extra to the "judge" for a conviction?) The really big work comes under the euphemism "administrative resources"—shamelessly drawing off state budget funds (the sundry shenanigans cost dearly) and resorting to fraud in the counting and reporting of results, even when victory is assured (they just cannot help themselves). Meanwhile, spaces on the presumptive winning electoral lists, like some appointments in ministries, are outright sold to the highest bidders, who can expect to utilize their purchased offices to accrue fortunes. Of course, entering parliament (federal or regional) also affords immunity from criminal prosecution. This is great stuff, and right on the money.

Welcome to the liveliest sector of post-Soviet market economies—politics, which is business. Wilson attempts indignation, but really he revels in the delicious phoniness, writing "of parties that stand in elections but have no staff or membership or office; of bankers that stand as Communists, of well-paid insiders that stand as the regime's most vociferous opponents." Take Vladimir Zhirinovsky, who first emerged as a fake classical liberal, then metamorphosed into a pseudo-fascist who shrieks hysterically in parliament. (He recently demanded that men not just in Muslim Tatarstan but across Russia be allowed up to four wives, "to help Russia's lonely women," and that every single migratory bird be shot out of the sky to pre-empt avian flu.) Ever controllable, Mad Vlad is a "scarecrow," a leader of a "pocket opposition" who makes crazy speeches so that whoever is in power looks moderate, then has his bloc vote squarely with the powers that be, raking in his rewards (often in the form of bricks and mortar rather than bricks of cash). "Very expensive," someone tells Wilson, "but very effective."

None of this began with Putin. Wilson opens with the czarist-era police tradition of "active measures" to combat revolutionaries by infiltrating their cells and sowing division and demoralization with provocations, then suggests, unhelpfully, that "the denial of truth in the Soviet Union throughout most of the twentieth century created many of the preconditions for virtuality in the twenty-first." Finally, he throws in the explanatory towel by invoking Viktor Pelevin's satire *Generation "P"* (Generation Pepsi, the last Soviet generation), which depicts all politicos as merely digital, existing only on television. A good read, but a leap from communist rule, when the use of television was lame (the party's top ideologues spent much of their time hand-editing *Pravda* editorials) and elections were *really* fake (a single candidate). In other words, having nailed the modus operandi of elections in post-Soviet "democracy," Wilson bangs his fingers over their origins and significance.

MOST OF WILSON'S SOURCES on the fakery come from the fakers—"reports" in the dubious media, his own interviews with the slimeballs. To find out what the public-relations artists actually do for their fees, he asks not the politicians whom they frequently misguide and fleece but the p.r.-niks themselves, who are shown to be desperately prospecting—registering new "parties," then looking for someone who needs one. Wilson tries to temper their self-promotion, but inevitably his book ends up becoming yet another platform for the blowhard "political technologists." Some of the highest-profile manipulators "advised" former president Leonid Kuchma in Ukraine—and we know how that ended (hint: fiasco). Nor does Wilson adequately elucidate the differing impact of the private and semi-private firms—which he estimates at about two hundred, of some thirty employees each—versus the "oligarchs," who mount their own operations, versus the muscular Kremlin or Bank Street (Ukraine's equivalent). The people who do, do not talk.

Wilson admits that many "virtual politics" schemes often turn out to be just that—posts on the Internet, never to be implemented. Further acknowledging that "a lot of projects" tried "were stillborn or ill-conceived," he nonetheless glosses over the Achilles heel of would-be political puppeteering throughout Eurasia—incompetence. His book in many ways demonstrates the failures of orchestration. At the same time, it says next to nothing about whether electoral constituencies exist (they do) and what the issues and values are around which the constituencies coalesce. Wilson constantly invokes fake nationalism, fake liberalism, fake populism, but some of these sentiments are substantive. Even among elites, one can find more than hypercynicism—everything from Eurasianism (the sense that Russia has a special mission owing to its size, its straddling of Europe and Asia, and its specific traditions) to Westernism. In fact, Wilson narrates endless betrayals among competing interests on the inside, even in Belarus and Kazakhstan, but somehow this competition within the authoritarian frame is not "real" politics.

Russian politics especially can seem opaque, a latticework of innumerable groupings of personal followings. Still, for my money, the pollster Yuri Levada, mentioned once in passing by Wilson, is a more reliable guide to the public-opinion structures underlying Russian affairs than the touts, such as Gleb Pavlovskii, whom Wilson spotlights. (And all the staging is increasingly unnecessary

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as the outcomes of elections become increasingly predetermined.) In the end, Wilson extirpates one tenacious myth—that post-Soviet politics even under Yeltsin involved a "transition to democracy"—only to plant another: that all politics there is "virtual," a façade concocted to hide theft (which in any case lies in plain view). The Russian electorate harbors fewer illusions than Wilson or the technologists imagine. It is all much simpler—lots of dirty money and dirty tricks, but an ultimate trump of fraud (successful and unsuccessful), plus a heavy surface froth of spin (effective and ineffective). The intrigues could scarcely be more intricate—or less likely to succeed. What does result, often unintended, is then claimed post facto by the clever, using gossip and the media, as their long-planned handiwork. Fakery indeed.

II

Kremlin Rising, the parting shot of a husband-and-wife *Washington Post* team after four years as Moscow bureau chiefs, is about Russia falling. Peter Baker and Susan Glasser detail Russia's explosion of HIV (no health care reform), atrocities in Chechnya (no security-apparatus reform), military hazing and avoidance of conscription (no military reform), environmental spoilage (no administrative reform), and the dreariness of U.S.-Russia relations (deep mutual animosity). They revisit the seizure of a Moscow theater in October 2002, which inaugurated a two-year period when "about a thousand people would die in terrorist incidents in Russia, more than in Israel," including more than three hundred at an elementary school in the North Caucasus town of Beslan, which showcased the heartlessness of the hostage takers and the corrupt ineptitude of the government. Every Russian Baker and Glasser follow, and there are a lot, who tries to buck or change the system hits a wall. This is the grim Russia that readers of today's American reportage will recognize.

But within their simple frame of "Western-style liberal democracy" versus "Soviet leftovers," Baker and Glasser stumble upon something interesting. They arrived during Putin's first term, an era of a new flat tax and other economically liberalizing reforms, but as Putin undercuts "democracy" they discover that he is popular partly *for that reason*. This is the scandalous argument about a Russian "flight from freedom" that Richard Pipes advanced in *Foreign Affairs* a few years ago, and which Baker and Glasser cite, not quite knowing what to make of it. They hear it in conversations with Russian voters, who time and again "surprise" the reporters: a majority seem to crave order, and view the KGB (whence Putin) as solid preparation to meet that challenge. The mystery is thus not Putin, whom the authors interviewed in June 2001, finding him "distant and calculating," albeit "well briefed." Rather, the mystery, or the disappointment, is the Russian people.

In their best chapter, Baker and Glasser explore the phenomenon of Soviet retro. This is epitomized by the radio station launched in late 1998 called *Nashe* ("Ours"), whose winning formula of emphasizing the Soviet over the Western became widely emulated. That same year—the year of the searing financial and emotional default—Pizza Hut outlets crashed and burned in Russia, and many were eventually replaced by the chain *Nasha* (Our) *Pizza*. Baker and Glasser add that two of Russia's more popular movies, *Brat* (1997) and *Brat 2* (2000), resonate—as their now-deceased lead actor explained—with "people who have been humiliated, injured, or broken." This "*nash*-ism" now pervades the economy, determining who gets licenses or financing and who gets a shakedown and "tax bill." *Nashi* is also the moniker of the new pro-Putin youth movement. Such wallowing can cross over into skinheads, arson, anti-foreigner pogroms, or just a craze for punk. On balance, though, Baker and Glasser maintain that "nationalism mixed with Soviet-era symbolism was the perfect balm to the collective bruised ego." They still condemn Putin for being a vile crusher of all alternatives to the Kremlin's will, but the Russian president comes across, perhaps unintentionally, as more understandable.

Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the jailed tycoon, provides the depressing book's coda in a newspaper article attributed to him from confinement, observing that his putative jailer, Putin, "is probably not a liberal or a democrat, but he is more liberal and more democratic than seventy percent of the population." Most Russians, Baker and Glasser assert, accept a trade-off between "greater stability" and "less freedom," but they also suggest that for elites, in the words of one unnamed official, "the ideology is power and re-distribution of property." So, do the propertyless reject freedom entirely or just the dubious version on offer, in which a few are free to steal everything (several times over) and the many are free to lose public goods? Professional polls consistently demonstrate that Russians overwhelmingly place "economic well-being" atop their wish list, ahead of social justice and far ahead of "democracy"—as happens to varying degrees in most countries, including democratic India. Like the "values" debate in the United States, in Russia there may be less to the ostensible devaluation of "democracy" than meets the eye. Conversely, on the supposed resurgence of the KGB's successor agency, the Federal Security Service (FSB), Baker and Glasser quote an unnamed retired veteran who says that "everybody who is now leading departments were the worst and weakest pupils of mine." He concludes that "the special services are degraded." But the reporters emphasize the KGB's restoration, not its degradation.

Despite the reportage, the book reveals the limits of even the best American journalism on Russia. As Baker and Glasser rehash, over two separate chapters, the arrest of Khodorkovsky, they do not quote a prosecutor or security official, at least not by name or job description. Occasionally they resort to hearsay, such as when they write that some "senior Russian official" informed them that the then–Russian presidential chief of staff, Alexander Voloshin, had told Khodorkovsky to fund the opposition communists. (This supposedly explanatory detail signifies that the oligarch was not freelancing, as if Voloshin were not above provocation, or Khodorkovsky could be told what to do.) Anyway, here as elsewhere it is not possible to discern the proximity of the authors' anonymous source to the events being described. Those old standby *Post* informants—Masha Lipman, the liberal commentator, and her husband Sergei Ivanov, the Byzantinist—are again summoned for talking-head duty. Baker and Glasser appear to have had no contacts in the weighty Finance Ministry (the finance minister finally appears on page 374, between dashes) or in the various control departments. Key insiders mentioned by name—such as Igor Sechin, the former Soviet translator of Portuguese from Mozambique days who later

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served as Putin's chief aide and is now in charge of the state oil company Rosneft as well as Kremlin economic policy—are seen from a distance.

ANNA POLITKOVSKAYA provides an angrier native version of Baker and Glasser's Russia falling. She works for a well-regarded Moscow newspaper, and in 2000 she won a Golden Pen Award from Russia's Union of Journalists for her dispatches from the war in Chechnya. Politkovskaya is often called Russia's best investigative journalist (a distinction that rightly belongs to Alexander Khinshtein). In *Putin's Russia*, patched together from her reportage, she insists that Russia is undergoing apocalypse, moral as well as social. The army is her special obsession, and she shows that officers press-gang conscripts into slave labor or beat them to death (five hundred such murders were registered in 2002). For her, Chechnya is not a far-off isolated war, but a corrupting infestation on all state institutions and the people. She is right. By now one million soldiers, as well as countless officials, civilian and military, have rotated through this zone of lawlessness. But Politkovskaya does not merely report; she intervenes. We read of Nina Levurda, a destitute pensioner, who struggles to learn how her son died in Chechnya and to recover his body for burial. The mother runs the gauntlet of official callousness and lies, but with Politkovskaya's help she manages to retrieve her boy's severed head. "Yes," Politkovskaya icily mocks Putin, "stability has come to Russia."

Disjointedly, Politkovskaya traces the lives of four acquaintances before and after 1991—a thirty-seven-year-old special-intelligence operative risks his life for Russia, but desk-bound officers connive behind his back and force him out of the service he loves; a professional couple get divorced, after which the husband kills another woman, serves a brief sentence, then throws himself under a subway train; a woman ends up a smashing success in business, but admits her wealth is malodorous. Not a pretty picture. Yeltsin tried, Politkovskaya implies, but turpitude resulted. Arguing that Russia's judicial system today is even more beholden to executive authorities thanks to Putin, Politkovskaya recounts the criminal trials of the decorated war hero Colonel Yury Budanov, who was charged with raping and murdering an eighteen-year-old Chechen female during the war. But he ended up getting convicted and sentenced to ten years. Politkovskaya plausibly asserts that army brass took Budanov's conviction as a direct insult, but she does not adduce the supporting evidence. "More and more," she writes, "stories are heard of the FSB using torture to fabricate cases." A lot is heard. It might be true.

Her best pastiche comes in the riproaring chapter on Yekaterinburg in the 1990s, which revolves around Pavel "Pashka" Fedulev, a hood who becomes the region's leading industrialist by taking stakes in spirit and ore factories. Pashka murders one partner after another, but locally evades legal jeopardy. When charges brought in Moscow are suddenly dropped, the "governor" welcomes Pashka back by having him named Urals Entrepreneur of the Year. It is a completely fitting title, since Pashka made his biggest investment in the Yekaterinburg authorities, especially its law enforcement agencies. Police SWAT teams and court orders accompany him to properties he is confiscating. " 'This is unbelievable!' I hear my reader cry," writes Politkovskaya. "Believe me," she insists. This chapter provides some excellent sources. Politkovskaya quotes what she says are statements made to the FSB. That's right: while incessantly excoriating the FSB, she demonstrates (without commentary) that some of its operatives are combating the organized crime within the state. Yekaterinburg "judge" Anatoly Krizsky, who drove a Ford Explorer costing twenty times a judge's salary, was put under 24/7 surveillance by the FSB and nailed—for pedophilia.

In sum, the book is a jumble not only organizationally but also intellectually. Consider the World War II veteran in Siberia who helped free the world of Nazism and dies frozen to his floor, his corpse crowbarred up, because his flat lacked heating. The Soviet-era infrastructure burst, Politkovskaya writes, and "Communal Services had no money to pay for substitute pipes." Who is to blame? The liberal reformers for failing to end massively subsidized municipal utilities, whereby no one is responsible for upkeep? No. Local officials who pocketed the miserly sums allocated for housing to build their palatial private dachas? No. The czar in Moscow is at fault! "I have wondered a great deal about why I am so intolerant of Putin," Politkovskaya writes. "What is it that makes me dislike him so much as to feel moved to write a book about him?" Visiting Russia's far eastern nuclear flotilla, which is decaying out of existence, Politkovskaya pounds the drum about "state heartlessness." She finds a commander of a nuclear missile sub in Kamchatka living hand-to-mouth in a derelict hostel with his wife, the holder of a Moscow degree who goes unemployed—*and the state does not care*. The state fails to take care of the people. Still, as with Baker and Glasser, the people—racist toward Chechens, supportive of Putin—let Politkovskaya down the most. "It is we who are responsible for Putin's policies," she despairs, "we first and foremost, not Putin."

IV.

BACKTRACKED REFORMS AND AN interminable insurgency in the Caucasus do not make for epic journalism—the kind that, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, earned foreign reporters so many top prizes. But the books keep coming. Like his *Washington Post* colleagues, Andrew Jack, a former

February 8, 1924: Gee Jon

Carson City, Nevada

In San Francisco, assault and murder among
the hatchet men of Chinatown were said
to be *as plentiful as blackberries.* The tongs
controlled gambling, *daughters of joy, hopheads*
from there to here. The D. A. argued the Chinese
can't tell right from wrong. *Inferior.*
Hanging had been Nevada's standard means
of execution; gas would be modern, more
humane. They practiced first on bedbugs. The day
before, the CHUNG SAI YAT PO reported some
kittens successfully gassed, and a *large white stray.*
At twenty to ten, they led him, weeping, from
his cell to the chamber. In minutes he *ceased to move.*
Ten-twenty: fans on. Door unsealed at noon.

JILL McDONOUGH

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Financial Times correspondent in Russia, notes Russians' wounded pride and exhaustion. Gorbachev, one informant tells Jack, "said he would open us up to the world, but we just saw how poor we were. We believed that the Volga was the best car in the world. Now we understand what shit it is." Jack, too, came to understand quite a bit. He details the venality of the private mercantile media before their re-expropriation by Putin's Kremlin, the reasons many Russians are better off than they seem, and the oligarchs' exaggerated political power—more the result, a sociologist tells Jack, "of slick public relations than of reality." Jack even displays an ear for Russian humor, which distills the current political system. "Are you from the Kremlin?" asks a guy standing in a bus. "Are you from the KGB? Are you from St. Petersburg? No? Then get off my foot."

Putin dominates Jack's book even more than the leader dominates Russia, but the portrait we get is fairly acute. Jack sets the stage with the tale of an American's efforts in St. Petersburg in the 1990s to sell donated butter to raise funds for loans to small businesses, a program beneficial to Russia that its bureaucrats stymie until the shrewd, resourceful Putin, who served in the municipal government, brokers a multi-step deal, dancing around Moscow. Then, after being transferred to the capital, he becomes head of the Kremlin's Control Department, responsible for scrutinizing state functions, and begins compiling dossiers on the affairs of everyone at the top, even on mismanagement in his immediate boss's circle. This behavior controverts something that the occasionally too even-handed Jack neglects to dispel—namely, the laughable but still widely bought story line that Putin never sought power and was an accidental president.

Be that as it may, once Putin became president, why did he not clean house? Simple: canning scores of officials risks producing an actual opposition of former insiders. Jack adds a second disinclination involving Putin's governing philosophy, which is said to derive from the president's favorite book, Gogol's *Dead Souls*, a satire on corrupt officialdom—the implication being that a czar cannot sack an entire state of functionaries, since who would he find to replace them? "Your assistant steals, why don't you fire him?" one shopkeeper asks another, explains Jack. "Because I know his limits. With someone else, how would I know how much they steal?" Jack's Putin is can-do, but only up to a point.

Like Andrew Wilson, Jack knows that Russia gives off phantasms. For Jack, the lightbulb illuminated while he was attempting to report the Slavneft "auction" in December 2002, when the oil company sold for a then-unprecedented "real" price of $1.86 billion, which was heralded as a new era in privatization. Jack discovered that the property had been carved up by insiders well before the miniskirted gavel show. Equally splendid is his reporting over the course of a few pages on the telltale beverage giant Wimm-Bill-Dann. Taking an old-fashioned approach, Jack reads the Russian company's two-hundred-page prospectus for the New York Stock Exchange. The document, "prepared by the company itself," divulges that Wimm-Bill-Dann's largest shareholder did nine years in a Soviet penal colony, that some top managers engaged in "related party" transactions to enrich themselves, and that the company rigged privatizations to make bidding seem competitive. What was untypical, though, was Wimm-Bill-Dann's hiring of managers for their professional expertise, heavy re-investment in the company (purchasing state-of-the-art equipment), brand development, and (eventually) improved financial statements. Wimm-Bill-Dann's NYSE-listed stock jumped, and French-based Danone bought a stake. (Today the iconic company trades at more than forty times earnings.)

For businesses in Russia, the rules are perverse, and the penalties for playing by the rules can exceed those for violating them. If Jack—uniquely capable and placed among foreigners as an *FT* correspondent—had written an entire book on, say, "Inside Business's Russia," he would have produced an enduring work. He yielded to the temptation to write the definitive overview *Inside Putin's Russia*, which, inevitably, was DOA, or dated on arrival. Economic liberalization, such as it was, got harder and harder to deepen amid entrenched interests and myriad problems, not to mention Putin's own hesitations, and it got bogged down even before Jack's book went to press with a subtitle asking, "Can there be reform without democracy?" But the question of how Wimm-Bill-Dann and the rest of Russia's predominantly private and semiprivate economy continues to maneuver, and sometimes to wildly succeed in spite of everything, remains as puzzling as ever. "The bureaucrats hassled, the regulators and courts failed to ensure fair competition, and financing was difficult to raise," Jack concludes, leaving us with an economic riddle wrapped in a political enigma.

V.

Whereas Japan is Western but not European, Russia is European but not Western. Westernization in Russia continues mostly to be decried as antithetical to "national" traditions. That self-imposed handicap is what makes Nicolai N. Petro's book about alternate national traditions seem promising. He contends that Russia possesses a native strain of democracy that thrived in a vibrant commercial setting—ancient Novgorod, an aristocratic-merchant republic with a collective assembly before its late fifteenth-century conquest by autocratic Moscow. After 1991, Novgorod's pols revived this heritage ("our own Russian Florence"), contrasting it to Moscow's despotism, and Petro argues that by redefining "reform as a return to the values of a better and more prosperous Russian past," Novgorodians got a better and more prosperous Russian present. Alas, today's Novgorod—where Governor Mikhail Prusak (who was born in Ukraine) has entered his fifteenth year in power—is neither a democracy nor an economic success. Still, the feral enthusiast Petro is partly right. The Novgorod myth did cast a spell: by the late 1990s,

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one in three members of the Novgorod intelligentsia had managed to obtain Western funding of one sort or another. And that circumstance, in Novgorod and around Russia, galvanized the Kremlin.

Officials with Kremlin access confirm that its denizens exude authentic pathos about a "fifth column." Putin and his retinue appear genuinely to believe that the West wants to make Russia a vassal, perhaps even break it apart. In the 1990s, this "threat" involved attempted IMF *diktat* and debt. Now it supposedly emanates from Western-financed NGOs. (Receiving Western money may be criminal, but being independent is really unforgivable.) For the retinue, Russia under Yeltsin was anarchic and weak; even Russia's pathetic liberals, the retinue believes, are dangerous for suggesting that the West wants to be partners with Russia. Therefore, a sacred mission, defense of the motherland, has fallen upon the innermost circle—"Vova" Putin (*primus inter pares*), "Seryoga" Ivanov (defense minister), "Kolya" Patrushev (FSB director), "Seryoga" Lebedev (director of foreign intelligence), "Vitya" Cherkesov (director of the Federal Service for Interdicting Narcotics). They rose together in the KGB, and gather on Saturdays to discuss their strong-hand strategy. Needless to say, it carries economic possibilities for them (as well as for jockeying second- and third-echelon interest groups). In the convictions-greed nexus, it is an open question whether geopolitics consumes more time and energy than self-enrichment. Much of state officialdom sees the retinue as "a new Mongol-Tatar yoke."

Sure, many functionaries are proud that Russia is flexing its muscles again, regaining its "sovereignty." But plenty of officials are aware of the contrast with the civilized world from traveling often to the EU on business or vacation, and they resent their state's ruling layer as tantamount to an occupation regime draining off wealth. But the Kremlin brother-band combines the club of the powerful presidency, which they feel duty-bound to uphold no matter what, with a lock on Russia's "world champion" companies (Gazprom, Rosneft), which are rendered strategic by the world's fossil-fuel addiction. Jack ferrets out an essay from back in 1999 that appeared under Putin's name, pre-presidency, which singled out raw materials as the basis for Russia's revival as a superpower. The essay—evidently a spin-off of Putin's dissertation, which was partly lifted from a Western book translated into Russian—also noted that Russia needed competitive, effective companies and a welcome climate for investment. Never mind: Western money, the swaggering Kremlin firmly believes, will keep coming, and on the Kremlin's terms. So let them deride him as Vladimir Gasputin!

BUT IS RUSSIA ON THE PATH TO revival as a superpower? It has collapsed back to its size during the reign of Peter the Great, reversing centuries of imperialism, although imperial ambitions always die hard. Still, the gas cutoffs to Ukraine and Western Europe demonstrated that the "lords of oil and gas" have a knack, as one Kremlin adviser on Asian affairs told me, for "stepping on a rake." Step on a rake and you smack yourself in the forehead. That exercise—repeated over and over by Putin and his KGB cronies—strikes me as worth keeping in mind amid the dire warnings of the threat to Europe and (soon) Asia from energy dependence on Moscow. The Russian military, despite somewhat pumped-up budgets, is still unreformed, a shell. Gazprom, the successor to the Soviet Gas Ministry, remains a different kind of mess: a study in corporate misgovernance. Above all, the Kremlin's oil and gas imperialism (using market leverage to induce asset swaps) goes hand in hand with its lust for secretive, unchecked, unaccountable power—ultimately, the weakest kind of authority, lacking self-correcting mechanisms.

Talk of a new cold war is silly given that Russia, wallowing in *nash*-ism and nearly friendless, lacks an all-encompassing ideology with global resonance like communism. There is indeed a menace emanating from Moscow, but it is inwardly hazardous. It is the absence in Russia and most of Eurasia of effective formal checks on executive power—a hoary tradition broken by Gorbachev, in part accidentally, but restored in Yeltsin's "presidential" constitution of 1993. Putin filled out that charter's generous autocratic potential. But lo and behold, the document contains a two-term limit on the throne. Much speculation now surrounds the presumed stealth preparations for transcending this constitutional barrier against a third presidential run for Putin in 2008. Nobody expects a real election. But the lack of honor among high-placed thieves who are jostling over the spoils means that anything could happen—except a turnabout toward promoting human rights and equitable business practices.

When affordable substitutes for hydrocarbons are widely introduced, lasting political transformation, as opposed to "revolution," may finally descend upon Russia and Eurasia, as upon much of the Middle East. In the meantime, the Russian elites' internal political scrum continues, with the riven factions of Putin-promoted marketeers still clawing and biting his similarly rivalrous security types for market-oriented policies. Global valuations of Russian companies and of its GDP—which even many Russian officials will tell you is the basis for great power status today, including in former colonies—also exert some pressure for much-needed further reforms: banking, workable federalism, entitlements, education, infrastructure. None of these huge, wrenching undertakings is assured. But if done, and done semi-sensibly (perhaps with WTO accession or after 2008), such structural reforms could be as important in their own way as free and fair elections and free and fair media. More effective everyday governance would be very handy should Russia at some point turn toward democracy.

DEMOCRACY? TWO RUSSIAS mold book after book: one, the Kremlin and the billionaires, supporting or screwing one another; and the other, an impoverished, infirm, criminally neglected populace. (In Russia's unaccountable political system, as Stephen Holmes has quipped, the oppressors have liberated themselves from the oppressed.) But there is a third aspect to "Putin's Russia." Untold numbers of Russians—consumers with money, not citizens with rights—are engaged in horizontal interactions across the country and international borders. Some 6.5 million Russians traveled abroad in 2004, about half of them to affordable Turkey, Egypt, and China. Domestic sales of private cars zoomed over $20 billion in 2005, and the forecast for 2006 is further vertiginous growth—just ask the multi-national producers in Russia, from Ford to Toyota, operating or opening new plants. Russia's explosion in private housing has spread well beyond the capitals, and mortgage mechanisms are just now becoming available. According to Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin, the population's income in 2005 increased nearly 10 percent over the rate

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of inflation—a hefty bulge in real terms, which he forecast would be repeated in 2006. Kudrin also predicted that in 2007 Russia's GDP would finally attain the level of 1990, right before the great depression and hyperinflation of the Soviet collapse.

What about Russian society, then, at least its dynamic elements? Estimates of the size of Russia's middle class—like India's or China's—are all over the map. Some 80 percent of Russians surveyed invariably say they are middle class. Probably 20 percent warrant such status. But anyone interested in broad social trends other than alcoholism—say, property ownership, investment, credit, and savings; educational opportunities and costs; consumer tastes; civic involvement or avoidance—cannot just pick up a book. One has to search out the scientific polls amid the clutter, purchase the uneven subscription-only research produced by investment houses, or read back from the advertising on Russian television. (The stations that cannot show the real war in Chechnya or criticize the Kremlin show a lot for and about society.) In January, the newspaper *Izvestia* published an overview of Russia's middle class based on an analysis by the Academy of Sciences Institute of Sociology. (I spoke independently with the scholars at the Institute.) Besides disposable incomes and computer saturation, members of the middle class are distinguished by employment in non-manual labor, higher education, enrollment in ongoing educational courses, knowledge of a foreign language, and a striving to be self-reliant. So far, so promising.

But an accompanying chart in the article on Russia's middle class indicated that nearly half work in the "state sector." One-third work in the "private sector" or at "privatized enterprises." Less than one-fifth work for themselves or foreign firms. To put the matter another way, Russia's middle class chiefly comprises functionaries in the bureaucracy and in large state or private corporations, rather than small and medium business owners—that is, they are partly dependent, not independent, people. Compared to small business—still minuscule, despite the easing of licensing requirements in 2001 and 2002—more of Russia's middle class, fully 15 percent, work in the military, security organs, interior ministry, and state prosecutor's office. Many of these people are owned by, or are owners of, big business. Small wonder that much has been made of the fact that Russia's movers, shakers, and hostage takers generally express a preference for the state to retain control over the economy's "commanding heights."

What should not be overlooked, however, is that these same people mostly do not favor an end to the market. Increasingly, Russian commentators have come to view them, Russia's "middle class," as Putin's social base, while Baker and Glasser remark of Moscow's middle class that "politics seemed increasingly beside the point." This amounts to two different ways of saying much the same thing. Simply put, Russians are acutely aware of the clumsy domination of the executive branch, an absurdity lamented (albeit quietly) even by many people working inside the hydra, yet accepted as inescapable—for now.

VI.

Back in the 1970s, when the Soviet Union began tanking and nincompoop American social scientists were analyzing the "convergence" between the Soviets and the West into "industrial society," China was a dirt-poor, illiterate peasant country bleeding from Mao's thirty-million-victim "cultural revolution." Over the next quarter-century, China's economy boomed some 9 percent per year. It just revised its 2004 GDP from $1.65 trillion to almost $2 trillion—a retrospective bonus equivalent to an economy the size of Indonesia's, or almost half of Russia's. Many Kremlin principals, perhaps including Putin, are enamored of the "China model." But they labor under a common misapprehension, exaggerating the role in China's dynamism of the country's central autocratic state, as opposed to regions competing for private investment, entrepreneurs, peasant migrants to the cities, and foreign owners. Russia's political sinophiles also overlook China's deep economic entanglement with the United States. In the 1990s, compared with Russia, China opened itself and its economy less, but it doggedly pursued global economic integration with America, which its rulers view as the indispensable path of advancement, not as surrender. Russia's equally grandiose aspirations have entailed a refusal of the option (to the extent that it has been on offer) of rising on American coattails.

Perhaps for this reason, among others, American media coverage of authoritarian Russia remains preoccupied with state corruption and mass poverty, rather than the expanding middle class and economic growth, while American coverage of authoritarian China is obsessed with the expanding middle class and economic growth, rather than state corruption and mass poverty. Baker and Glasser, who resided and worked in the *Post*'s long-held space in a Stalin-style *massif* on Kutuzov Street, near where Brezhnev and Andropov lived, seem confounded by the banal physical persistence of the Soviet era in Moscow. But they note that cherished cultural landmarks are being ripped down, façades and all. They are bowled over by the boomtown quality of today's Moscow. It is not just the skyrocketing prices in intimate neighborhoods such as the Ostozhenka on the Moscow River—once bestowed by Ivan the Terrible on his dreaded *oprichniki*, later the haunt of Romanov-era aristocrats and merchants. Baker and Glasser also observe that when Putin took office, Moscow had two million square feet of mall space, while five years later it had twenty-one million. They could have added that Moscow is now the world's second-largest construction site, after Shanghai.

In Vilnius a few weeks ago, Dick Cheney ripped into Russia in the run-up to the G-8 summit in St. Petersburg scheduled for this coming July. The vice president launched the equivalent of a confrontational spy plane across Russia's borders—remember the incident with China?—by admonishing the Kremlin for using its natural resources as "tools of intimidation and blackmail" and for the way that the Kremlin, "from religion to the news media, to advocacy groups and political parties," has "unfairly and improperly restricted the rights of [Russia's] people." Cheney is known to hold similar views on China, though on the latter he has publicly been more muted. Other critics, such as the former insider Andrei Illarionov, want to believe that Russia's and China's glaring institutional shortcomings and authoritarianism will at some point start punishing the regimes, not the freedom advocates. A lot of investors, though, are willing to go on betting big that China and Russia will continue to surge while flouting most of the ostensible rules for long-term growth. On one thing the critics and boosters agree: following this trajectory in the long run, we're all dead. ■

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BEIRUT DIARIST

Oriental Sexpotism

WHEN *PEOPLE* MAGAZINE asked me to interview Haifa Wehbe, a Lebanese pop singer, for its 2006 "100 Most Beautiful" issue, the assignment seemed like a welcome break from the usual high-risk, low-paying jobs I receive as a freelance journalist in the Middle East. After all, how difficult could it be to throw a few softballs at the sexiest woman in the Arab world? Several of my normally serious colleagues among the Beirut foreign press corps practically begged to be taken along as photographers or assistant pencil sharpeners. But then *People* sent a list of questions the editors wanted me to ask—What's your best feature? What's your worst feature? What kind of moisturizer do you use?—and I knew I needed to do this alone.

HAIFA AND I SHOW UP FOR THE interview—at a lawyer's office in West Beirut—wearing nearly the same outfit: blue jeans and a dark blazer. But, wow, does she look better than me! Raven-haired and curvy, she's nothing like the aerobicized Hollywood blondes who normally fill the pages of *People*. Embarrassingly, I catch myself staring at her famously ample bosom, though only to avoid her mesmerizing genie-in-a-bottle blue eyes. She makes polite noises—in fluent English—of being flattered by my interest in her beauty secrets, but I'm in an excruciating quandary: What kind of facial expression do you use when you're sitting next to an Oriental sexpot while she complains about her jawbone structure? Do you nod sympathetically? Or act horrified by any suggestion of imperfection? I try to remain impassive, but eventually the strain begins to show. "How does it feel to be a man asking a woman these questions?" Haifa asks jokingly, but the damage is done. I don't feel like much of one.

PERHAPS I SHOULD TAKE COMFORT IN the fact that Haifa has a strange effect on men—and just about everyone else in the Middle East. She is the most exciting of a generation of female Arab singers, most of whom are Lebanese and most of whom go by their first names: Haifa, Nancy, Elissa. In the past, Arab divas seemed to stand for something political. The Egyptian singer Umm Kulthum was the Ur-mother of Nasserite pan-Arabism in the '50s and '60s, while Fairuz, who refused to pick sides or even perform in her native Lebanon while its civil war raged, became one of the few symbols of Lebanese national unity. And, though it would be unfair to say that the Arab divas of yesteryear had faces made for radio, they were (how to be polite?) very talented singers. But this new bevy of Lebanese hotties, who came of age in the era of globalization and Britney Spears, stands for just one thing: sex, or at least the mass-mediated illusion of it.

HAIFA'S MUSIC, LIKE MOST OF LEBAnese pop, is an unremarkable combination of machine-generated drumming, tambourines, and synthesized shepherd pipes that sounds as if an '80s band like Bananarama were performing for Ali Baba and the 40 thieves. It's her booty-shaking that sells tickets. Onstage and in her videos, wearing tight jeans and black kohl eyeliner, Haifa mixes Eastern belly dancing with Western nightclub moves in an MTV update of the Dance of the Seven Veils that promises all and delivers nothing.

ALL OF THIS IS SHOCKING TO MANY IN this conservative region, but not in the way you might expect. The reactionary mullahdom of the Middle East is mostly too busy declaring fatwas against foreign depravity to pay much attention to the local variety. So, in February of this year, while a couple thousand fundamentalists burned the Danish embassy in Beirut, no one really noticed when as many as 200,000 people gathered for a Haifa concert in Oman. In Lebanon, she's practically a national treasure, especially in the conservative Shia-dominated South, where she was born in a small farming town. The Lebanese attitude is that their country may be totally screwed up, but at least their women are hot.

AND YET, HAIFA TOUCHES A CULTURAL nerve that manifests itself in a weird phenomenon: Haifa jokes. There are hundreds of them, and they typically involve Haifa having car problems in a remote redneck town and a local mechanic who suggests payment in kind. The joke suggests the insecurity of a region caught between the sexual modernity represented by Haifa and the sexual backwardness of traditional village life. Or, as Edward Said might say if he were alive and well and watching satellite television: After centuries of being Orientalized—colonized, victimized, and sexualized—by the West, the East is embarrassed to discover it has Orientalized itself.

TWO DAYS AFTER MY INTERVIEW WITH Haifa, I wake up to find that she is filming a music video in the apartment beneath mine. I live in the kind of shell-shocked Mandate-era Beirut building favored by wannabe bohemians and location scouts, and one of my neighbors is on the production crew. I go downstairs with a cup of coffee and a bedhead, only to bump into Haifa's manager, who gives me a look that says it's too early in the morning for questions about bikini waxes and breast implants. Haifa slinks her way onto the set wearing naught but a nightie and hot pants, and, when she recognizes me, I call out in Arabic, "Kifak, Haifa?" and she starts laughing because I've just said "wassup?" using a male pronoun. My humiliation is complete when, moments later, her makeup artist lets me know that my fly is open.

THE SHOOT IS FOR HER RECENT SINGLE, notoriously known as the Wawa song. Supposedly, it's meant for children—a "wawa" in Arabic is what we would call a "boo-boo" in baby talk. "See the wawa, kiss the wawa, and help it get better," Haifa sings, dressed as various fetish archetypes like Little Red Riding Hood and a naughty schoolgirl. You don't have to be a member of Al Qaeda to think this is a little too kinky for kindergarten. But, as I return upstairs to attend to my personal grooming and file my interview for *People*, I wonder if perhaps that's exactly what all the lost boys of this lost region need: a beautiful woman with fantastic tits to kiss them where it hurts.

ANDREW LEE BUTTERS

Andrew Lee Butters is a writer based in Beirut.

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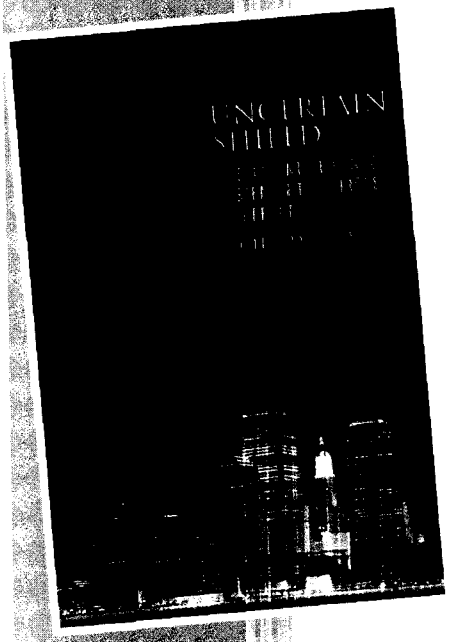

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- Emphasizes the importance of reforms that do not require questionable organizational changes

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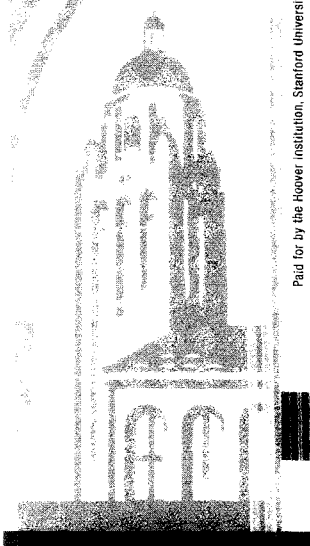

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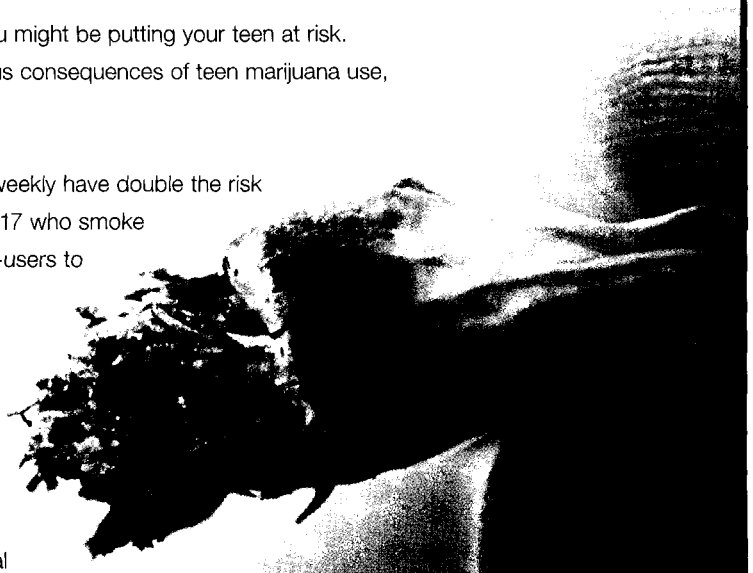
Office of National Drug Control Policy

MARIJUANA AND YOUR TEEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Depression. Suicidal Thoughts. Schizophrenia.

If you have outdated perceptions about marijuana, you might be putting your teen at risk. New research is giving us better insight into the serious consequences of teen marijuana use, especially how it impacts mental health.

Did you know that young people who use marijuana weekly have double the risk of depression later in life?[1] And that teens aged 12 to 17 who smoke marijuana weekly are three times more likely than non-users to have suicidal thoughts?[2]



And if that's not bad enough, marijuana use in some teens has been linked to increased risk for schizophrenia in later years.[3]

Today's teens are smoking a more potent drug[4] and starting use at increasingly younger ages during crucial brain development years.[5] Still think marijuana's no big deal?

Remember, you are the most important influence in your teen's life when it comes to drugs,[6] so tell your teen the facts about marijuana. Teens who learn about the risks from their parents are less likely to smoke marijuana or use other drugs than teens who don't.

Let your teens know you don't want them using marijuana. Their mental health may depend on it.

Signed,

- *American Psychiatric Association*
- *American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*
- *American Society of Addiction Medicine*
- *Asian Community Mental Health Services*
- *Association for Medical Education and Research in Substance Abuse*
- *Institute for Behavior and Health, Inc.*
- *National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association*
- *National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers*
- *National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare*
- *National Latino Behavioral Health Association*
- *National Medical Association*
- *Office of National Drug Control Policy*
- *Partnership for a Drug-Free America*

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[1]Patton, GC et al. Cannabis use and mental health in young people: cohort study. *British Medical Journal*, 325: 1195–1198, 2002. [2]Greenblatt, J. Adolescent self-reported behaviors and their association with marijuana use, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 1998. [3]Arseneault, L et al. Cannabis use in adolescence and risk for adult psychosis: longitudinal prospective study. *British Medical Journal*, 325: 1212–1213, 2002; Veen, N et al. Cannabis use and age at onset of schizophrenia. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 161: 501–506, 2004. [4]*Marijuana Potency Monitoring Project. Report No. 83*, University of Mississippi, 2003. [5]SAMHSA. Trends in Initiation of Substance Use, 2003. [6]SAMHSA. Parental Disapproval of Youths' Substance Abuse, 2002.

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